

# Farscape TV Show - "You Fart Helium?" - Farscape Photos & Videos, Farscape Reviews & Farscape Recaps | TWoP

-- Page 1 --

Before I get started, I just want to say that I'm really impressed that the *Farscape* fans managed to get together over a thousand bucks for this charity recap, and I'm very flattered you all picked me to do it, especially given that I've never seen the show. I do, however, at least have some [experience](#) with [recapping series premieres](#). In any case, if I don't understand everything about the show, don't send Ben Browder to kill me, please! Of course, if you want to send him on some other errand, I don't know who I am to stop you.

Also, did they call this first episode of the series "Premiere" because they were afraid that "Pilot" would be too confusing, with Crichton being a pilot and all? Or was it because of the alien called "Pilot"? Or do they just like *Premiere* magazine? These are the things I think about, people. At least your money's going to a good cause. Okay. Fade up on the beautiful setting sun, right across the river from what's presumably Cape Canaveral, if the space shuttle in the distance is any indication. The camera pans left to show a man watching the facility. A shot of his face reveals him to be the aforementioned Ben Browder, and the sun's got very little on him. And that's the beauty shot that begins *Farscape*. I guess I'm going to have to go update my wish list now.

We see a headline of some journal turned to an article that reads "Childhood Friends out to prove a Theory" ([sic] on the capitalization), with a picture of Browder's character, John Crichton (even I knew this one going in) standing in front of an equation-filled whiteboard, with his friend next to him massaging a model of the space shuttle. Someone off-screen says that launch conditions are optimal, and since Crichton is suiting up, I'd have to agree. The off-screen voice belongs to the aforementioned friend, who babbles about the experiment they're undertaking, which entails trying to use the Earth's gravitational force to exponentially increase the speed of a manned aircraft. Considering the friend manages to touch Crichton about seventeen times during this explanation, I'd say this isn't the first experiment he's been a part of. The friend notes that Crichton seems unenthused, and asks what's wrong. Crichton tells the friend, "D.K.," that he feels like a big change is imminent in his life. D.K. looks concerned, but can't dwell on it, as a well-preserved older man with silver hair joins them. Silver Hair: "You're looking pretty sharp there, Commander Crichton." Obviously Silver Hair's prime physical condition extends to his eyes. Crichton thanks the man, who just happens to be his father, and then is all, "Let's do this thing." Thousands of viewers rush down to City Hall to officially change their names to "This Thing." Everyone files out.

-- Page 2 --

After a close-up of the shuttle, Crichton and his dad walk down a hall as Elder Crichton says that he talked to the people at Control, and they're going to take good care of Crichton. His dad continues that he heard that Crichton went "AWOL from the rat cage," and goes on that if he'd ever broken quarantine in his day... He then asks

Crichton if he's got "rattlers" in his stomach, because this is a manly father-son bonding session, and as such has no room in it for pussy-ass things like butterflies. Crichton reminds Elder Crichton that he's already been up on the shuttle twice, but Elder Crichton says that never made any difference for him. The basic underlying vibe from this scene is that Elder Crichton was a bad-ass astronaut, and while he's genuinely proud of his son, Crichton worries about living up to his father's reputation. Elder Crichton says he never got to use his brain while he was flying, only..."Guts and the seat of my flight suit!" parrots Crichton with a big, warm smile. Aww. Elder Crichton finishes by saying that Crichton will be his own kind of hero. "Chances are, it'll be the last thing you ever expected." It's a good thing Crichton's about to travel across the galaxy, because he's going to have to search far and wide to find a bigger understatement. Elder Crichton then gives Crichton a ring on a chain, which Crichton doesn't want to take at first, as it's Elder Crichton's good-luck charm. Elder Crichton: "You give it back to me tonight." And with that, I can't believe that Crichton's ship isn't named the *U.S.S. Minnow*, and that they didn't call Pilot "Skipper."

Launch. Beauty shots, dramatic music. Later, the shuttle's in orbit as a female reporter's voice tells us about Crichton's mission again, saying that the craft he's going to pilot is of his own design, and also that he'll try to get the Earth's gravitational force to slingshot him off into space "at previously unrecorded speeds." She adds that a successful outcome would be the first concrete step toward interstellar travel. Or, for alien races who keep tabs on Earth, the "there goes the neighborhood" moment. Crichton calls in from his ship, *Farscape One*, and asks D.K., "Are you with me there, Mama Bear?" Um. I'm trying to escape that comment without a homoerotic joke, but it's more difficult even than what Crichton's attempting. I'm going to do my best to ease away slowly, though. D.K. then tells Crichton he's a go for "insertion procedure." Yeah, I knew that wouldn't work. Anyway, Crichton heats up and shoots off. We get cool looks at *Farscape* hurtling around the Earth. Suddenly, D.K. freaks, as Meteorology reports that an electromagnetic wave is headed for Crichton. Crichton tries to get more information, and D.K. in turn tells him to abort, but it seems like the wave interferes with the transmission. Elder Crichton then takes over and orders Crichton to abort, in that tone that he probably used when child Crichton was in the basement playing astronaut and didn't heed his mother's first call for dinner. He's not going into the wave to be contrary here, Pops. But into the wave he does go, and very soon after that, it folds up and is gone. D.K. has a look on his face like, "And tonight was going to be the perfect night to tell him how I *really* feel."

-- Page 3 --

Crichton hurtles through the wave. It's cool-looking. Spinny-spinny CGI, Crichton yelling in pain. He's going to have a talk with NASA about their wuss-ass G-force simulators if he ever gets home. Finally, he comes to a stop. He tries to contact Canaveral, and asks if they got video of all that. Well, it may get there eventually, but it'll be eons into the future. NBC may even be out of its ratings slump by then. Anyway, Crichton soon realizes that both Canaveral and Earth aren't so much around, and what's more, he might want to avoid dying in the asteroid field in the middle of which he's suddenly found himself. I hope he had an Atari as a child. He hilariously is like, "Uh...Canaveral?" So much for the three-hour tour. Credits.

Which are awesome. They're even better than those of [Veronica Mars!](#)

When we return, Crichton's still floating in space, but he's close to a large asteroid, and there are other ships zipping about. I just hope Crichton has seen *The Empire Strikes Back*, so he knows not to land on the asteroid, as that's a good way to get eaten by a space slug. Anyway, one of the ships zips up behind Crichton and clips one of his tail fins, or whatever they're called. The offending ship careens off and explodes, and that's why you never get behind the wheel if you've had more than one glass of [Romulan ale](#). Crichton, for his part, seems okay, until he comes across a behemoth of a ship. He breathes, "That's big," and I'll leave it to you to imagine where and when he might have said those words before. The little zippy ships are shooting at the great big ship, which looks kind of like an enormous wishbone, at least from this angle. Crichton realizes that he's being pulled into the belly of the ship, and tries to call Canaveral for help, like, stop living in the past, Crichton. He rather gently gets towed into the hangar amid what my closed-captioning describes as "hydraulic whirring." Eventually, he comes to a stop, but before he really has time to catch his breath, a pair of antennae peer in at him. Okay, they're not antennae -- they're plastic attachments with lights on the end that are meant to look like visual antennae. But given that they're attached to a sort of souped-up [Roomba](#), it seems silly to go into detail describing them. The Roomba makes R2-D2 noises at Crichton, and then something explodes on one of his consoles and a fire breaks out. Crichton pops the hatch and exits his craft as he extinguishes the fire. He looks around, hearing all sorts of noises, and then sees the Roomba come out of hiding, one of its antennae damaged. It runs away. Crichton looks at his ship, and then suddenly a different Roomba, if the undamaged antennae are any indication, pops up and start beeping at him and pointing mechanical arms threateningly. Crichton just stares dumbly until the Roomba zaps him with something. Wow, when that dude later says that Crichton is retarded, he'll do so without even having seen this little performance.

-- Page 4 --

Cut to the brothers Roomba herding Crichton onto the bridge. Hee. They're like Corgies! Anyway, Crichton sees a couple of aliens with their backs to him, who are attempting to fend off the zippy ships, some of which we see through the viewer. One of the aliens looks sort of like a male refugee from *The Lion King*, while the other was turned down from the Blue Man Group because she is, in fact, female. Crichton hears enough different alien languages that the jaunty music from the Mos Eisley cantina would be kicking up right now, were it not for the mortal peril and all. Crichton just stares slackjawed, but given just how alien these aliens are, he can get away with it for another couple of minutes. He slowly walks forward, and eventually gets the attention of the two aliens. He amiably starts to introduce himself, but Simba grabs him by the throat and lifts him into the air. The undamaged Roomba zaps Crichton in the foot with something, and then the alien tongues resolve themselves into English. I thought you put Babel fish into your ear, not your foot, but I always wondered whether Douglas Adams had ever really logged any serious field research. The founder of the Blue Woman Group advises Crichton to answer Simba, as he knows "how Luxans can be." Well, he doesn't, but he's certainly getting a crash course. I'm sure he'll thank the Luxan for that, assuming his trachea is still functional. Simba asks what model ship Crichton is driving, as he's strapped for cash and he knows someone who will pay full

Blue Book. Blue Woman, Singular, asks if the technology he used to get there could be something they can employ to escape.

Frustrated with the whole "people can't talk while they're being choked" concept, Simba tosses Crichton away, and then demands that "Pilot" give him maneuverability immediately. A hologram of Pilot pops up inside a clamshell. I have to take a moment and laugh at the randomness, as this is my first science fiction recapping experience. Pilot says he can't do anything until the "control collar" is released. I can't really come close to describing Pilot, by the way. The best I can do for you is say that he sort of looks like what Frank Oz would come up with if he were asked to design a scaly Muppet with a helmet-head, who also is in possession of as many arms as Vishnu. Pilot bitches that *Moya*, ostensibly the ship, can't withstand the assault much longer. Simba starts freaking shit and ripping a bunch of wires out of random places, causing a new character...you know what? I'm not even going to try to describe these characters. I'm doing no better than a blind person here, and if I have to stare at Rygel indefinitely in an effort to figure out how to describe him, I'm going to wish I were blind myself. So, real names for the characters from now on, and you can just [look them up](#) if you're one of the three people reading who hasn't seen every episode of the show a gazillion times.

-- Page 5 --

So Rygel flies by on his ThroneSled, imperiously thwapping Crichton as he passes. Our boy isn't having a good day here. Zhann asks where the others are, and Rygel informs her there are no others. This is going to be one of those numerous examples where ships that officially require a complement of hundreds of people to be run well can in fact be operated by a handful with little ill effect. Space travelers are such drama queens, although I suppose we already knew that from Scotty and frickin' Geordi LaForge. Rygel also informs them that they were to be taken to a "lifer's colony." Oh my God, they were going to have to work for a non-profit? Crichton nervously asks if they're escaped prisoners, because he doesn't mind hanging around with Muppets at all, as long as they're law-abiding. Rygel says he'll protect Crichton. "I'll look after you now, you look after me later." Ah, the old "you scratch my back, I scratch something on you that I'd really rather not contemplate" deal. There's an explosion, and Pilot informs them that the hull integrity is somewhere around "eggshell." Zhann chants a prayer, and then suddenly, she realizes that the "coding wall" is dimming, so she thinks D'Argo must have hit the code. That doesn't seem likely, as all he was doing was ripping whatever shit he could find apart. I mean, I'm sure I've done that in response to extremely stressful circumstances, but it wasn't with any constructive purpose in mind. Pilot announces that the control collar is coming off, and a bunch of metal starts floating into the space around the ship. D'Argo instructs Pilot to prepare for "immediate starburst." Pilot is hesitant, possibly because it's a process named after a candy that doesn't taste that good and actually pulls your teeth out at the roots. ["Hey, don't be dissing strawberry 'bursts, man." -- *Sars*] Actually, it's because *Moya* has been inactive for a while, but D'Argo says that *Moya* is a "Leviathan," and this is its only defensive maneuver. Meanwhile, Crichton is still floundering dumbly on the floor. Geez, Rygel's two feet tall. He can't have hit you that hard, Rocket Boy.

Cut to an Eevil voice telling the zippy ships, "Prowlers," to break off their assault. Pilot tells everyone to hold on to something, and then a wave of light starts at the back of the ship and courses over it. Rygel grouses that he hates starburst. Man, it's not a good sign for a character when I'm telling him to shut up fifteen minutes into the first episode. By the way, shut up, Rygel. The light forms a portal, and the ship enters it and disappears.

-- Page 6 --

The Prowlers fly around a large ship. With the two big handles coming out of it, it looks like a bit like a floating tote bag. I guess someone donated a lot of money to the interstellar version of PBS. The Eevil Crais, wearing a black uniform, army boots, and a goatee, marches around the bridge, barely deigning to acknowledge the female underling giving him a report. Dude, calm down here. I think even Crichton would realize that you're a bad guy. Blonde Underling tells him about *Moya's* escape and the casualties incurred, but she only gets his attention when she shows him video of the drunk-flying incident. Turns out the dude who clipped Crichton was Crais's brother. Whoops! Crais orders Blonde Underling to "peel back the image," so he can see who was piloting the ship that was sitting still minding its own business. By the way, I know a lot of things are different in this part of the galaxy, so you'll be reassured to know that they have carbs here, if the way Crais fills out his uniform is any indication.

The *Moya* comes out of starburst. Pilot informs D'Argo that a Prowler got caught in the slipstream with them, and D'Argo orders him to jam its radio and net it. Zhann asks Pilot if *Moya* knows where they are, so apparently a Leviathan is a living, sentient being. Pilot sniffs that of course he (she?) does -- beat -- "I'll get back to you on the specifics." I know a couple of comedy clubs where Pilot would fit right in. For no apparent reason, Rygel makes a wheezing noise, and then sneezes some red viscous fluid, some of which hits Crichton. Given their earlier arrangement, I'll leave it to you to decide what the proper *quid pro quo* should be. Crichton, aghast, asks what's the matter with "you people." Offended at being called a person, D'Argo sticks out his tongue. Only his tongue is several feet long, and clocks Crichton in the back of the neck. Crichton's reaction is a little late, but he manages to turn and stare disbelievingly before falling to the deck unconscious. Hee.

Shot of the Leviathan...Leviathaning. D'Argo complains that they have no idea where they are. Zhann smiles and sexily comes over and introduces herself. D'Argo notes that she's "Delvian," and she adds that she's a priest. D'Argo murmurs that he's heard of the Delvian priests' practices, their "appetites," including something called the "fourth sensation." Zhann grins that she's experienced that, and invites him to buy a copy of her book, *The Kama Sutra Is For Children*. D'Argo notes she can't have experienced it lately, and she agreeably agrees. Completely flummoxed, he hems and haws over his next line until even my closed captioning gets fed up and decides to go grab a cup of coffee. Anyway, he finally asks Zhann why she was imprisoned. She tells him that even for her people, she was something of an anarchist. Hmm, an anarchist priest who has lots of mind-blowing sex. I think Catholic missionaries would consider her planet a hardship assignment. She adds that she was the "leading anarchist," which is D'Argo's cue to tell her that he killed his commanding officer. It seems like that wouldn't necessarily prompt her to take his hand, but perhaps that news turned her on, given her affinity for anarchy. Not that she seems to need a whole

lot of help in the turning-on department either. She asks how old he is, and hearing the response of "thirty cycles," says he's but a boy. Maybe, but from his point of view, that makes you whatever the blue-skinned, Lead Anarchist version of a MILF is.

-- Page 7 --

The sex-charged talk stops when D'Argo asks Zhann if she knows "Peacekeeper Coding," and she answers in the affirmative. They discover they were imprisoned on the same maximum-labor planet, "Mekkar 7," but when D'Argo reveals he worked in the mines, Zhann seriously asks him why he's not dead. D'Argo says he doesn't know, as he saw countless others die while the Peacekeepers looked on. Wow, can you imagine if he ended up having to work with a Peacekeeper? I just hope they have sophisticated enough technology that they'll be able to download the *Odd Couple* theme music. Zhann speculates that he survived so he could fight for freedom, as they're doing now, and D'Argo chuckles that that's a very Delvian way of looking at the situation. Zhann replies, "I am nothing if not a product of my upbringing," because most people who were brought up to believe in the ways of their society advocate overthrowing the government. Okay, she might have been kidding. She's kind of inscrutable. Anyway, they share a sweet moment...

...which segues into an even sweeter moment, as Crichton wakes up in a cell with no clothes on. Out loud, he hopes that everything that happened was a dream, so I guess that settles the question of whether he sleeps in the buff. Anyway, he hears a squeaking sound, and looks over to see that the Roombas are enjoying the show, not that I blame them. Rygel floats by and start punching some buttons on a console next to the cell door. Said door, by the way, is crisscrossed with a lot of solid metal, making it impossible to see much. It makes me appreciate the genius of Em City in Oz.

Anyway, Crichton's nudity finally hits him, and he runs off to the side to grab his togs. You can see that he's wearing underwear there, not that I probably need to tell anyone with a rewind button. He yells at Rygel, "Why did you take off my clothes?" ending any possibility that anyone watching this show could think he was intelligent. Rygel imperiously says that he doesn't need to talk to Crichton, as he's ruler of 600 billion people. Crichton points out that he was imprisoned, and Rygel grumps that his cousin stole his throne, but he plans to take it back posthaste. He goes on that they took Crichton's clothes off so he could be examined, and Crichton freaks out at the probing he might have underwent unawares. I'll just leave D.K. out of this -- he's probably having a tough enough night as it is. Crichton asks about the injection he got, and Rygel tells him it contained translator microbes, which colonize at the base of the brain and allow them to understand each other. Well, I'm a little skeptical, but it's better in concept than the freakin' "universal translator." Crichton mutters "colonize" and "brain" to himself, and while "colonize" is the bigger word, I'm still betting it's the less unfamiliar to him. Crichton asks why he's locked up, as he's not there to harm anyone. Rygel says they can no more trust him than they can trust "that," motioning across the cell. Crichton looks over to see a figure in a flight suit and helmet, presumably the pilot of the Prowler. I'd wonder why she sat still for so long, but maybe she wanted to enjoy the show for as long as it was there. But now she gets up and doffs her helmet to reveal a pretty, if disheveled, brunette, who's eminently human-looking. Crichton gets this doofy grin on his face, and walks over to introduce himself. The woman answers by introducing Crichton's face to the wall, and then



boots him in the stomach a couple of times, felling him to the floor. She gets down on her knees and straddles him, and asks what his rank and regiment are. Crichton again is too short on air to speak, which is just as well, since I don't think Officer Kickass here would take too kindly to hearing him reply that he's Officer Beaver of the Vulva Regiment. We cut out of the scene with Crichton thinking that if he's got to die here, it's probably the way he would have chosen. Don't tell D.K., though.

-- Page 8 --

The *Moya* floats through space. Officer Kickass, who I won't pretend any longer that I don't know is Aeryn Sun, gets frustrated with Crichton's slackjawed gaping. She'll be in good company around here. She calls Rygel a "Hynerian slug," and demands to be let out, but he tells her no dice, and also calls her a Peacekeeper. Da dunt da dat da dun! That's my best approximation of the theme music to which I referred earlier. Crichton realizes that Sun was attacking the ship, and that the prisoners think he's one of them. Sun imperiously introduces herself, and demands again that Crichton identify himself. He testily tells her his rank is Commander, not that that necessarily means anything. I mean, I'm Captain of my living room, but I don't expect that carries much weight halfway across the galaxy. He goes on that he's not military, but a scientist. Sun looks skeptical. I think I like her. Meanwhile, Rygel has succeeded in locating the former prisoners' possessions. D'Argo and Zhann show up, and D'Argo goes over to get his "blade," while Zhann contents herself with taunting Sun that she should be used to seeing the likes of them through bars. I'm used to seeing the likes of them through bars too, but only in the West Village at very odd hours. Crichton tells Zhann he's not a Peacekeeper, and she tells him they realize that now, as he's got some "decidedly unfamiliar bacteria" living within him. He tries to explain further, but she cuts him off, telling him that it's time to eat. The cell door opens, and Crichton, hilariously warily, is like, "Eat what?" Mmm, tasty unfamiliar bacteria! D'Argo just gives him an "oh, stop it" smile and head-tilt. If that was meant to be reassuring, it went about as far wide of the mark as Crichton's experiment.

Over at the Fleet of Eevil, Blonde Underling tells Crais they've got the image of the pilot. When they see Crichton, Blonde Underling is like, "He's Sebacean!" Yes, he is. By the way, I'm really looking forward to the end of summer, as it's been in the nineties for weeks, and that's way too Sebacean for my tastes. Crais informs Blonde Underling that they'll be leaving the armada and going after the Leviathan.

Crichton is whining about the bindings on his wrists. Zhann easily tells him that they still don't know his loyalties. He babbles about alien contact and movies and the Milky Way, and then realizes that she doesn't know what he's talking about. I'm thinking Zhann's priestly background has infused her with a good deal of patience. Not so Sun, who looks like she's so over this place she couldn't see it if it were the size of the Great Wall of China. Crichton asks about the ship, and Zhann tells him that "she" is a Leviathan, "a bio-mechanoid, a living ship." Which is cool, but can also be a problem...

-- Page 9 --

...as we cut to D'Argo heatedly telling Pilot that if he hadn't ripped out those wires, the control collar might not have come off. Pilot concedes that that may be true, but it also caused *Moya* to leak most of her "iridescent fluid," and as a result, their current speed is barely "Hetch Two." I'm going to rely on the context to conclude that that's bad. As Pilot continues to bitch, we focus in on Crichton sitting and Sun eating. Crichton asks

why the prisoners are feeding them, and Sun replies that they'll need information to survive. As Sun tells him to eat, as it might be his only chance they get, she casually slides a utensil into her sleeve. I know this is a different part of the galaxy, and traditions may vary enormously, but I still think that, having been prisoners themselves, they'd know NOT TO GIVE THEIR CAPTIVES METAL CUTLERY. Zhann comes over and tells them that they're approaching an inhabited system with a "commerce planet," causing Rygel to break in about all the things they need, among which is beauty aids. D'Argo snarls that they need iridescent fluid. Hear the Muppet out, D'Argo. He also threatens to toss Rygel out with the next refuse dump. If he's looking for objections, he won't get any here. Rygel sputters about all the things he's done for them, and even Zhann is tired of this shit and tells them to shut up, and then asks Sun if there's Peacekeeper presence in the system. Sun merely defiantly chomps on some food in reply, while Crichton gives us the banner headline that he doesn't know. D'Argo says that Sun is infantry and therefore won't have sensitive information, and Crichton is a "higher brain function deficient. How he escaped the genetic sieving process I do not know." Well, they don't have that on Earth, D'Argo, but we should probably look into it. At least for people who work in customer service. Rygel farts in the background, and suddenly everyone's talking like a eunuch. Won't get much of the fourth sensation if that's the case, I'd reckon. Crichton squeaks, "You fart helium?" And that's really about the funniest thing ever. Rygel says it's only when he's nervous or angry, and I don't know if that means he's not flatulent when he's calm, or that we can look forward his ass powering a neon sign at some point in the future. Pilot cuts in (heh) that they're entering planetary orbit, and then somehow D'Argo figures out what Sun has up her sleeve and disarms her. Zhann holds up the shrimp fork, all purposely overdramatic and thereby hilarious with the *J'accuse!*, and Sun just smiles petulantly. Heh.

-- Page 10 --

The *Moya* heads in for a landing, to a city bathed liberally in clouds. From the size of the other speck-sized ships you can see zipping around, I think it's safe to say that the *Moya* doesn't skip any meals. Cut to Rygel imperiously bartering with a large lizard-like creature with three jaws, each containing many, many sharp teeth. The creature hisses at Rygel, and I'm really hoping it'll bring these negotiations to a dramatic close by eating him. Then not only would I be rid of Rygel, but I'd get to hear the creature hissing in soprano through the digestive process. The creature offers twenty barrels of something for Rygel's wares, and Rygel tells him off, but when the creature hisses again, he sweetly asks, "Thirty-five?" Heh.

Crichton complains about Spielberg being wrong with *Close Encounters*, and I don't even know what he's talking about, because I was eight when that movie came out, and the one time I went to see it I fell asleep five minutes in. Note to Crichton: Please stick to pop-culture references that came out after I discovered coffee. He and Sun are back in their cell, although sadly, he hasn't been disrobed again. I'm sure Sun could manage it if she were so inclined, but she seems to want to get out of the cell for some reason. Crichton then announces that he must have come through a wormhole, and it is for brilliant deductions like this that he is no doubt known as the smartest astronaut in the history of forever. (That's for [Demian](#).) Crichton continues babbling that he needs either to find another wormhole or create one, and Sun, with



Zhann-like restraint, doesn't point out that the first step in that process should be HELPING HER WITH THE ESCAPE EFFORTS, GENIUS. Oh, wait, there she goes, doing just that. I really kind of like her. I should point out that *Farscape's* version of "NASA" is "IASA," according to Crichton's uniform. This is what you get when you pony up all that money for a good cause. Anyway, Crichton whistles at Sun, and slyly produces the shrimp fork or whatever from his sleeve. The fork is like, "Don't ever wash me again."

Cut to Sun hurrying Crichton along the corridor. She tells him she's going to sabotage the ship. She and D'Argo should get together. Crichton's not down with that, as all they've done to him is take off his clothes, which is not only understandable but, if the producers of this show are going to cater to their strengths, something he's going to have to get used to. Sun exoposits that she hates compassion, as the surprises keep on coming. Crichton wonders if he should hang out with the prisoners instead, and asks how he knows he can trust Sun. Sun: "You don't. That's just another thing you don't know." Wow, she's a recapper too. No wonder I like her. She clomps off, and Crichton seethes, "Damn!" No doubt he thought of a comeback three seconds too late. He should start writing them down, as I suspect that happens to him a lot.

-- Page 11 --

In the hangar, Sun sniffs at Crichton's ship, and says they're taking hers. Cut to her Prowler heading toward the planet. On the command ship of Eevil, Blonde Underling tells Crais that they've received a transmission from Sun, who has "the being from the white pod" with her. Uh oh, Crichton. Maybe a joke will ease the forthcoming tension. "I just flew in from Earth, and boy, are my arms tired!" Yes, you can keep that one. Planet. Aliens walk around, doing whatever it is aliens do. Crichton takes it all in dumbly, and mumbles that he's on another planet. Thanks for keeping up.

Elsewhere, D'Argo tells Zhann the news from Pilot: Crichton and Sun have left the ship. I guess Pilot was exfoliating during the whole escape. I'd imagine that would take a while. Worse news is that Crais is on his way to the planet with a full command carrier. Zhann notes that it makes no sense for Crais to come after them himself, and D'Argo concludes that he must be coming because of Crichton and Sun. "This barter session is over." Does that mean the lizard is hissing in a high register? No, we just cut to D'Argo grabbing Rygel and getting him out of there.

Sun finds Crichton and tells him she's relayed their rendezvous point, so they can get off "this waste hole of a planet." They turn to go, but Sun sees the *Moya's* shuttle take off, and she rushes to report it. Crichton wonders if that's necessary, as if Sun has wavered a lot in her devotion to duty so far. She snaps that they're prisoners, and they must be recaptured. She turns to find a sword-wielding D'Argo sneer, "Or destroyed." I see that even halfway across the galaxy, they're no strangers to the *awkward*. Sun starts to run, but then turns and assumes a fighting posture. Crichton warns D'Argo that the Peacekeepers are on their way, and D'Argo levelly says he knows, which is why he wants them aboard *Moya* as insurance. But Crais and several Peacekeepers show up at that moment and subdue D'Argo. Sun marches over to greet Crais, who totally ignores her. That seems kind of cold, but he did do it in favor of getting right up in Crichton's face. Crichton somewhat reluctantly gives his name, as every time he's done so to this point, he's ended up in a heap on the floor. But Crais merely asks where he's from. I'd think this was an unthreatening enough start, if Crais weren't in

his full dress robes of Eevil. Sun pipes up that Crichton claims to be a human, from a planet called "Erp." Crichton looks dismayed that she thinks his home is named after a reaction to drinking carbonated beverages. Which, by the way, I'd advise you to keep away from Rygel. Crais announces that Crichton murdered Crais's brother, as he charged him "in that white death pod of yours." Sun, having seen said death pod herself, exhibits her military discipline by not laughing out loud. Crichton's denial of responsibility holds no water with Crais, who leers, "A human. That will require some study." Crichton reaches to unbutton his pants with a "here we go again" expression on his face. Well, not actually, but I'm kind of surprised they didn't go that way. Anyway, Crais is looking forward to pulling Crichton apart, prompting Sun to pipe up in his defense: "I don't believe he is brave enough or intelligent enough to attack one of our Prowlers intentionally." Crichton's either smart enough to keep quiet, or too dumb to take offense. I'm not even sure those two are mutually exclusive. Crais menacingly asks how long she's spent with Crichton, prompting D'Argo to snicker to himself. Crichton tries to pipe up that it wasn't much time at all, but Crais smoothly continues that Peacekeepers are quite limited in the amount of time they're permitted to spend with "unclassified alien life forms," and she may well have exceeded those parameters, which would make her "irreversibly contaminated." Sun tries to deny that, no doubt regretting that she didn't nail Crichton if she were going to be contaminated anyway. Crais orders them taken away, and D'Argo swears that someday, he'll kill Crais. Maybe you can borrow Crichton's death pod for that.

-- Page 12 --

Zhann returns to the ship and finds out from Pilot via Clamshell Cam that they're almost ready to go, but D'Argo hasn't checked in. Also, Rygel messily eats. Well, that was informative.

Somewhere on the planet, the prisoners are searched. One of Crais's henchmen asks Crichton what his dad's good luck charm is, and Crichton explains that it's a puzzle -- you have to figure out how to take it apart and then put it back together. Interesting that something Crichton's father employs for luck is probably responsible for Crichton beating his head against a wall in frustration on numerous occasions. The henchman starts playing with it, and then another henchman gives him shit for it and tries to take it away, and in the ensuing confusion Crichton grabs the first guy's laser gun out of his holster and points it at them. He fires off several errant shots, and if his aim is that bad, he probably would have ended up halfway across the galaxy even without the wormhole's help. But the fact that he can't hit the broad side of a barn doesn't stop the henchmen from cowering in fear. We go to break in this tableau as I wonder why there are only two guards for the three prisoners. Maybe they're understaffed, what with all the hot aliens flying their death pods around and the like.

We return to the same scene. Crichton gets the key for their cuffs, and D'Argo and Sun clamor to be first like it's recess and they're trying to get onto the better dodgeball team. One of the henchmen counsels Sun to give herself up: "You might avoid a death sentence." This guy needs to polish his sales pitch. Crichton gets D'Argo to unlock his cuffs, but doesn't return the favor until D'Argo agrees to take both him and Sun with him. D'Argo's not too jazzed about taking a Peacekeeper, nor is said Peacekeeper thrilled about signing on with this band of freaks, but in the end, neither of them has any choice.

So they arrive at *Moya* in...Sun's Prowler? Well, I guess that's what D'Argo was planning all along, except he probably thought he'd have to pilot it himself. Pilot informs Zhann that it's D'Argo in the Prowler, and Zhann thanks "Khalaan" for his safe return. When Pilot adds that Crichton and Sun are with D'Argo, however, Rygel thinks D'Argo must have made that report under duress. I think he can take care of himself, unless the atmosphere in the Prowler was made toxic by Crichton taking over where Rygel left off. You never know how foreign bacteria will react to the local cuisine. Zhann doesn't have time for Rygel's nonsense, as she tells Pilot to break orbit. D'Argo strolls in and adds that he should set course for the Uncharted Territories. Wouldn't that be ironic if they ended up dropping Crichton off for dinner at home after all. Pilot informs them that a Peacekeeper ship is aiming its "frag cannons" to bear on them, at a distance of sixty "metras." I wonder if there's an England equivalent in this system where they still insist on using "yerd." They ask Sun what the range of the cannons is, and she reluctantly tells them that it's only forty-five metras. Crichton suggests they do another of "those starburst things," but the dramatic music has already kicked up, precluding it from being that easy. Indeed, Zhann tells him that *Moya* must restore her energy reserves, so starburst isn't an option at the moment. As the enemy ship closes to within weapons range, Crichton gets an idea and spazzes out, telling them to head for the planet's atmosphere. He asks for paper, but while the microbes may be able to make everyone's lips move in English, they can't convey the meaning of that particular word, so Crichton is left to try to write on the floor. *Moya*: "Stop, that tickles!"

-- Page 13 --

The frag cannon moves into position threateningly, or as threateningly as something that looks like a jazzed-up hubcap can look. Zhann takes an interest in what Crichton is writing, and he tells her it's a theory of atmospheric friction. Rygel asks if he's insane, but is ignored. Time to sneeze on him again, Rygel. Interspersed throughout this scene are cuts of the cannon and the enemy ship, so just take my word for it that the other ship continues to close, yet doesn't fire, apparently waiting for Crichton to finish his calculations. That seems like a good way to achieve a head-on collision. Crichton tells his crowd they're going to need to hit a very precise trajectory, and when Pilot whines about that, tells Sun she's going to have to pilot the ship manually. That doesn't make much sense, but we can't let little things like sense get in the way when there are less than ten minutes left in the episode and this ragtag, unlikely bunch has yet to learn a Very Special Lesson about Working Together. Sun tells Crichton she won't fly. Don't ask her!

Crais instructs "Weapons Control" to give him a full charge, like, nice to have waited this long to give that order. Maybe he got delayed stepping on some kittens or something. D'Argo yanks Sun over to the flight controls as he orders Pilot to give him maneuverability. Pilot babbles an objection, and everyone screams, "DO IT!" Hee. Even Zhann has her limits. Sun takes the controls as Crais's ship fires several shots, one of which finds its mark but doesn't seem to do much damage. Crais's bridge crew is then horrified to see that Sun has turned the Leviathan around and is heading toward them. It passes close by, and Crais takes the controls of his ship himself. On *Moya*, Crichton instructs his people to let the planet's gravity pull them in. Well, I'm no scientist, but I think THAT'S HOW GRAVITY WORKS, GENIUS. He goes on that they need to dive straight into the atmosphere, and everyone starts to look ill as Crichton

calls for more speed to slingshot them out of there. Hey, isn't this the way they traveled through time on the *Star Trek* serieses? I hope that doesn't happen here, though, because as far away from Earth as they are, there's a good chance they'd run into the Borg. Of course, the Borg would probably take one look at this crew and say, "Assimilate *what?*" They're into technology, not looks. The Leviathan hurtles through the atmosphere, and then Crichton tells Sun, "Pull out! Pull out now!" That certainly evoked a more interesting visual image than I was bargaining for. Sun pulls *Moya* out of the atmosphere, and they hurtle away, although it doesn't seem like they're going any faster than they were before. Crais observes this with his best "curses, foiled again" expression as we head into the last break.

-- Page 14 --

*Moya*. Crichton thanks Sun for her part in the escape. Zhann affectionately thanks Crichton, and presses one of her ears to one of his. An electronic ping goes off, and from the look on Crichton's face, Zhann's got one of the games from [the sex episode of TNG](#) stuffed into her head. Riker would just love her, not that I didn't think that already. Sun stares quizzically as Crichton stretches out his neck. Hee. Later, a Roomba scoots by, and then we see Crichton packing up his bag. Cut to D'Argo sharpening his blade, and then cut to Zhann chanting and meditating, presumably in her quarters, while not wearing much of anything. Cut back to Crichton walking around, and then D'Argo appears out of nowhere, grabs him by the lapels, and says they need to talk. Crichton takes umbrage at the manhandling, and then a weird scene ensues wherein first D'Argo implies that he's happy to have Crichton aboard, but then throws him up against a wall and presses his sword to Crichton's neck and says he'll kill Crichton if he threatens his freedom. I think Pfizer may have a big new target market for Zoloft on the Luxan home world. Crichton rubs his neck and wonders what he has to do not to get his ass kicked around here. Sun's voice cuts in that the Luxans are a brutal race. Crichton thinks that Sun's people are just as bad, especially Crais. He expresses relief that, according to Pilot, Crais's people have no jurisdiction in the Unknown Territories, but Sun points out that Crais thinks Crichton killed his brother, and as such is unlikely to obey local ordinances, unless one of them happens to be "disembowel hot blue-eyed aliens at will." With some of the usual edge out of her tone, Sun counsels Crichton to choose his allegiances carefully, and then leaves.

The Roomba with the damaged eye pipes up its approval, and Crichton beckons it over. He tapes up the broken antenna as he records a message to his dad on a tape recorder. God, Crichton, I know things look desperate, but there's no need to emulate [Janeane Garafolo](#). Anyway, he tells his dad that of course he won't get this tape, but in case he does, he's alive, and dammit, he's not going to stop until he reaches home. Or for four seasons. (Too soon?) Also, I kind of hope his dad does get the tape, just to see his "WTF?" expression when he hears his son's heartwarming speech interspersed with a conversation with a Roomba. Its eye functional again, the Roomba skitters off. Crichton then grabs Rygel, who has appeared next to him and is pawing his stuff, and asks what he's doing. Rygel: "Your equipment may be worth something in trade." If you want something of Crichton's that would be valuable in trade, I'd start with another kind of equipment. Crichton points out that it's *his* equipment. Completely unintimidated, Rygel asks, "Are you a sound sleeper?" with a pretty good sardonic

smile for a drippy piece of felt. He Thronesleds off as Crichton goes back to his tape and says that there's life out there -- "weird, amazing, psychotic life -- and, in Technicolor." He also confesses that he's got rattlers in his stomach. This was probably before a full-season order was issued. We get a beauty shot of *Moya*, and we're out.

-- Page 15 --

Now I'm going to have to watch this show. *Thanks*, you people and your charitable donations.

<http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/show/farscape/exodus-from-genesis/>

## Aeryn Wide Awake In the Garden -

-- Page 1 --

**Q:** Joe Piscopo, Whoopi Goldberg, and Brent Spiner walk into a bar...

**A:** And Jacob never watched *Star Trek* again.

I don't think it's a coincidence that the commonly accepted favorite characters in the first two *Star Trek* series were, variously, a half-human/all-logic robotic person who went psycho whenever he got horny, and an actual robot guy who spent the entire thing trying to figure out basic human interaction, humor, sexuality, emotion. Or that *Voyager's* most intriguing relationship combined the two, with additional breasts everywhere. Or that the all-time most hated episode of *Next Generation* involved forty-five minutes of the red-headed doctor lady [masturbating herself senseless](#) on Planet Scotland. That's kind of intense, and more than a little intimidating coming out of nowhere, as it did. I thought it was awesome, but it turns out I was just waiting for *Farscape*. If *Star Trek* is a utopian civics lesson, in a surgical theatre, *Farscape* is anonymous sex. In a sewer.

Honestly that's the only thing I really like about this episode. There's been much talk of [Battlestar](#) bringing balance to the Force, as far as TV sci-fi, and I honestly think *Battlestar's* what happens when you combine the all-brain sterility of *Star Trek* with the no-brain chaos of *Farscape*: women who aren't just bodies and mommies, men who aren't just scientists and daddies. Character and plot working together. Not better, not worse, just more suited to me personally: *Farscape* is the drain that *Star Trek* runs into, so it can stay nice and clean. Case in point: this episode, which advances the sex-in-a-sewer mandate to no end, and explains Rygel once and for all at the same time.

Rygel paints a portrait in his room in a short little scene, snacking and humming to himself in a satisfied manner. Art? Ah. It's a painting of himself, crudely painted, and the last thing we hear is him lauding its perfection. It's about propaganda, the fact that nine times out of ten on this show, what gets attacked is self-image more than anything else. Not bodies being exploded, but the lies you tell yourself. Being force-fed your own ugliness so that you can burn it out. So you can see the precious stuff you didn't even know about because you were covering up with the lies.

-- Page 2 --

D'Argo chases John through *Moya*, trying to force-feed him something gross. In space, you see, they don't have toothbrushes -- they have "dentics," which are like Khan maggots that you put in your mouth and let them crawl around sucking all your plaque and bacteria off your teeth. "Get out of my face!" screams John, meaning it literally, and D'Argo calls him a coward, noting that dentics are vastly more efficient

than toothbrushes. John whines and bitches and moans and wishes fervently he were on the *Enterprise* -- because you know that however they do it, you never even have to admit that you eat or shit or get stuff between your teeth -- and finally D'Argo just shoves the thing into his mouth and watches him feel it working. John finally gags, and D'Argo grabs him by the neck. "Never. Swallow. A dentic!" Which hygienically and scientifically makes sense, but also comments on symbiosis: the rudeness of the host in killing its parasite would here be punished by toxicity and death. In space, you have to be nice to your parasites, and to the fact of their biological ickiness, because it mirrors your own. Off this line, Moya goes wonky and lurches, tossing D'Argo and John around and knocking Rygel into his painting, where a long red line now mars the canvas. Imperfection. Aeryn calls D'Argo and John ("Hmm...kinda minty!") up to command.

Outside, there's a lovely and sinister haze, moving strangely. "Best I can tell, it's asteroid debris," says Aeryn. D'Argo asserts that asteroid debris does not move like that. What does? Something gross. I don't know why anybody likes this show, but I do know that if you can get through this episode without barfing, you probably will like this show. The haze jerks on Moya again, and there's a jolt as John and Zhaan enter. "Don't tell me -- Moya's got hiccups," says John, and D'Argo demands that they immediately get away from the cloud. Aeryn illustrates that that isn't the real problem, because D'Argo always sees the closest thing and wants to fight it, and Aeryn always sees the farthest thing, and wants to kill it: a ship on the other side of the debris field. Aeryn and D'Argo agree that they have to stay on the other side of the cloud from the ship, and John figures out that it's a Peacekeeper scout ship. "Crais's eyes and ears," as Zhaan explains, "...And claws," Aeryn smiles. It's a Marauder, one of those ships I can never tell which is which. "Five man crew. Highest level of training. Success measured by body count." John starts to ask Zhaan, then changes course mid-question to Aeryn, the PK in attendance: "How fast can they go?" It's a nice nod to remind you that (a) Zhaan is his go-to girl for information, starting now basically, and (b) Aeryn's ex-PK.

-- Page 3 --

A Marauder can go "hetch seven," which even John knows isn't that great: "That thing's a Hyundai!" He gives a whole speech to Aeryn's neck. He's not even trying to avoid the question at this point. D'Argo: "If they discover us, Crais will know exactly where to concentrate his search. And we cannot outrun a Command Carrier." Aeryn agrees with John, who gets pissy: "Of course [D'Argo's right], Ms. Sun! He's been here longer." The Marauder stops scanning and takes off, and Aeryn's whole body relaxes. Poor Aeryn. Pilot thanks her for her help, and she half-smiles: "We work together well, Pilot." [Poor Aeryn](#). Outside, the haze moves around strangely, and seems to dissipate, causing John to sigh about the wonders of space -- but of course it's only coalescing in Moya's docking bay. And it's bugs! Horrible cockroaches everywhere! Credits! *Ha hoo ha! Ya ya yo!*

In the maintenance bay, John's flipping over a a DRD after tinkering. I always thought of them as Moya's immune system, but I like "laser-firing metal cats on wheels" better. "Go on, get outta here. Shoo. Go. Go home," he mutters to it, because even with the dentic he understands being nice to your parasites. Aeryn futzes around, trying to get things *Enterprise* clean so she doesn't have to think about the PKs, but John's not



having it. He's a scab-picker. "So, those Marauders really shook you up." She answers the letter and not the spirit, because feelings are the enemy: "The *ship* is called a Marauder. The team on board are Commandos." And in case you forgot that she's ex-PK -- or that John loves poking this particular beehive -- he goes to the same place he does in every episode. "Like you?" She ignores it, which is wise, and starts tossing shit around. He asks if she's worried they'll come back, and she says it's unlikely: "Marauders follow a very strict search pattern. It's a cross-hatch star pattern." Because those who can't handle, teach, she draws it out for him in some pink debris. It looks like a multiplication symbol, like an asterisk, and if you go to the bottom of the page it says:

*\*Aeryn is not interested in your mess, so here's a small lesson in tactics.*

She describes it as "Clean and efficient...no prey escapes." (I bet a regular Peacekeeper thinks they're just like the Federation: idealist, utopian, open-minded, egalitarian. And if they don't really take the Prime Directive into consideration, well, the Bajorans did okay, right? I bet the PKs *love Star Trek*.) "You ever serve on one?" Aeryn tells him that her "application for transfer was awaiting Crais' approval" when [everything went to shit](#). "This little mutiny," she calls it, and tries to pull fascist rank on Earthlings: "I'm sure your world has no force so ruthless, so disciplined." John's like, "They're called linebackers...or serial killers. Depends on whether they're professional or amateur." Something else looks at them in *Monstervision* as John tries again with old Aeryn. "Look, you're not in this alone. Everybody onboard has had their lives derailed from what they thought they were gonna be. Should be. We're stuck together. And as long as we are, we might as well be --" She laughs right in his beautiful face with her big beautiful face. "What? Family? Friends? I want neither." You need both, lady. As well as a bunch of Jesus. Love isn't invasion, it's symbiosis: be nice to your parasites. "Well, somebody's gotta be there when you need 'em," accents John desperately, and Aeryn asks him what the hell she could possibly get out of John. Besides awesome makeouts, I guess, and he mutters to himself, "Manners? Personality? Stock tips?"

-- Page 4 --

Zhaan helps Rygel straighten up his quarters, for much the same reason as Aeryn, but we don't know that yet. Rygel uprights his painting, notices the big red stripe, and darkly vows that somebody's going to pay. Zhaan sighs because she's so much better than Rygel is, and puts it on the easel. "Is that how you see yourself?" It's pretty regal. Rygel says that his mother always said he was the best looking, which is why she had his older brothers banished: "She said my face belonged on the Imperial seal." Oh, moms; they do have favorites. He whines that the painting is ruined and turns, revealing that there's a long red line on his face that matches the one on the painting. Imperfection. Zhaan laughs because she loves nothing more than other people's faults, and cleans him up as we watch them in *Monstervision*. Rygel sighs, because he's still only really comfortable around Zhaan, and the two of them make total sense together most of the time. He's all body, she's all spirit. (And unless somebody else comes along, his soul-twin Chiana for example, you can bet he'll get psychic powers at some point, and Zhaan'll get cancer, because the opposite thing from what you are is *How They Get You*. John has nightmares about war for the rest of the series;

Aeryn's inability to deal with her feelings causes her to engage in some *really* fucked-up behavior when things get bad.)

Zhaan starts painting, pissing off Rygel, but as she moves faster and faster -- she did this in the premiere as well -- he is reduced to just a hum of dissatisfaction. After a few seconds, Zhaan steps back and he gets a good look. "Oh! Huh. Is that how you see me?" It's really quite beautiful. He looks like somebody worth knowing, for once. "It's called a spirit painting. We Delvians do it for recreation. ...It's rather rushed," she smiles, but she's proud. "It looks like Rygel the Great! Rygel the First, my most honored ancestor!" She smiles sweetly, beautifully: "Obviously, a part of his spirit resides within you." Monstervision watches as Rygel bitches hilariously at the painting: "You had it so very easy." It's a gift from Zhaan to Rygel, the thing he needs and will carry into the rest of this episode like a witch-gift in a fairy tale. A comb that becomes a forest; a bean that takes you to Heaven. Her "You could be more."

Back in the maintenance bay, Monstervision watches Aeryn and John cleaning; she walks over us, and as she reaches down for some more junk, a pair of pincers reaches out for her hand, but John distracts her away. "Aren't you hot?" she asks, and he says "No." The fuck he ain't. D'Argo comms in to report that he's showing "abnormal thermal fluctuations throughout the ship," and asks them to confirm the reading in the maintenance bay. Aeryn is vindicated and gets all smarty-pants about it. Aeryn is narrowly missed by a spur thing from the alien bugs. This is starting to get a little creepy. "D'Argo! The giant Ouiji board says -- uh, optimum plus three." Aeryn says it feels more like plus thirty, and D'Argo assures her they'll fix it once they isolate the cause. "Well, then stop talking, start isolating," she snits, and reaches down again. This time the beast gets her, right through the wrist. It's yucky. She yelps, and John's concerned, but she just yanks the thing out, tosses it aside, and wipes the blood off. I bet D'Argo would have concentrated a bit longer on the thing -- warrior v. soldier. They take off, and the bug grabs the bloody spur. This should be fantastic.

-- Page 5 --

HA! D'Argo's totally staring at a spur with his blood all over it. Oh, and then he drops it. Never mind. Aeryn and John join him in command, the latter bitching about the heat some more. "Moya's propulsion system is generating more heat than usual at this speed," Pilot says, and D'Argo notes a blockage in the vents to space. Aeryn asks about the A/C, and Pilot informs her that "all attempts to chill the ship are being overridden by the heat buildup," and John gives her a look. "*Chill* being the operative word here, Aeryn." Pilot gives updates that, even if he shuts down the nonessentials, the heat's going to be at plus fifteen within six hours. Rygel's like, "Fix it, bitches!" and...so is Aeryn. "I'll fix the damned problem myself." Zhaan tries to calm everybody down and says that they'll all search together, tier by tier, with Pilot narrowing it down from his chamber. She's good in a crisis, and good at being the glue. I will give her that. "On Luxan, this is a mild winter morning," says D'Argo, like somehow he's more of a badass for not caring about the A/C, and Aeryn's so not impressed: "Another reason Sebaceans hate his world." Ah, the smell of apartheid in the morning. Zhaan indicates the main valve control for "all of tier seven" to John, who pushes and pulls and looks like an idiot for awhile, until she finally giggles and easily switches it. He duffs around ("Oh yeah. No, I knew that.") but she's very cool about it. "There's so much new information for you to assimilate. Sometimes the smaller things will allude

you." He thanks her gratefully for understanding that fact. "The others treat me like I'm some kind of Earth idiot." God forbid she let that one go: "Granted, they're not the most patient beings. But what did you expect?" John doesn't notice the propaganda: "A little slack, maybe? You know, at least they know where they are. How things work. Takes me ten minutes to figure out how to open the door." She's really amazing in this scene -- none of the resentment that's characterized her interaction with Aeryn, and hardly any of the condescension D'Argo might earn. I think this is maybe due to Virginia Hey's acting here, because she's an impeccable actress (and loves Zhaan's kinder, more mystical side almost as much as I resist it) -- and so she shades everything with John in this episode to almost entirely loving solidness. It's a nice leadup to next week, of course, but also says a lot about Zhaan -- the only people she treats with honest respect are Rygel and John, or the guy next week. That takes a lot of strength, because she regularly levels with the most irritating possible people, and it's not condescension when she does it. They give her the best window for learning about people, I think, because they tell themselves less lies, because they're too naïve to tell the really good ones. Like she can. Zhaan begs him to develop some patience with himself, if he's going to make it -- ignorance is a parasite -- and John nods. "I am trying. But you know, with Aeryn and D'Argo, it's like...everything's a test. It's like I'm in some neverending Frat Hazing at Alien U." Translator microbes are like, "We give." He tells her they can rent *Animal House* on their next stopover planetside. She smiles again. "John, they're soldiers. Win their respect." He asks -- short of cutting somebody's throat -- how he can possibly do that. Since Zhaan's strategy of just openly telling anyone who will listen that she's better than them won't exactly work for him, because of how he's a fuckup. "Actions. Actions speak to them. Like tactical maneuvers. Defending the ship. Fixing the heat," she grins, pointing a thumb at the valve. He thanks her for this one, and takes off. She calls after him, making sure he's got the hang of the A/C. "Oh yeah. Just watch me *spring* into action." He says he's going to check all the vents in the living quarters and they agree to meet back at command.

-- Page 6 --

John walks into his quarters, where one of the bugs is removing a stray hair from a little black astronaut comb, and comms in to Pilot that the tier five passageway is clear, and he's heading for Rygel and Zhaan's quarters next. So far, so good. Then, of course, he notices the open vent in his room, and gets worried. He finally spots the giant bug on the floor, and hops up onto a flange in the wall. "Um! Anybody, uh, anybody hear me? Anybody?" D'Argo comms and John tells him they may have located the problem. D'Argo asks over and over what he's found, but he's too busy edging away from the bug, and then noticing another one on the ceiling, and then generally doing the Dance of Cockroaches you might remember from college, where the floor is hot lava and you've got the willies. "Bugs!" he finally yelps, and Aeryn comms in to tell him he's an idiot: "Stop wasting time! Ship beetles don't clog exhaust vents!" John says it's more possible when they're two feet long, and asks for an ID on the things. D'Argo says he'll have to catch one of them, and John realizes he's actually gotta do something and interact with the creatures and that Zhaan was right. Aeryn comms that they're on their way, and to under no circumstances let the bugs get back into the vents. "Between you and me," he levels with the bugs, "You guys

can go anywhere you want." The one on the ceiling drops, and heads for the vent, and John gets cornered by the other one, at which he screams, causing it to stand up on several legs, horrifyingly, and John begins to rue the day like it's never been rued before. They dance back and forth like *Duck Soup*, hilariously, and he finally manages to drop a blanket on top of one of them. He cheers wildly for himself for a bit before clobbering the thing. He waits for a while to see if it'll move, and then makes to take off with it, hanging like a hobo knapsack. It screams again, so he beats it some more. It's a human reaction. The blanket is covered in blood. It's just a parasite. He looks inside and almost boots.

In the medical bay, Zhaan cuts the bug and prays for it. Rygel makes fun of her for praying for a parasite, and she reminds him that they don't know what it is. "Well, it's on board this ship, uninvited!" he yells, and she admits she shares his concern. "But if I can analyze its DNA, perhaps we can understand why it's here." Rygel, because he's disgusting, grabs a big clot of bug and sniffs it, reminding her in turn that there could potentially be hundreds of them in the living quarters. Zhaan says she's agrees with Crichton's theory that they came aboard when the space cloud floated all over them. Rygel daubs a bit of the bug guts on Zhaan's perfect ass. He's so weird. She stops like going to yell at him about Moya's sexual harassment policy, but then exclaims, "Crichton! ...It's Crichton's DNA?"

-- Page 7 --

The thing you killed without even thinking about it, the way you started the war because it was disgusting and too alien, the human reaction because you assumed it wanted to hurt you, the thing that scared you so bad you got brutal: it's got your DNA. Everything you ever shoved under the bed, everything that was too gross or wet or smelled weird, the show wants to bring it out and say this: It's got your DNA. Maybe you don't jump so fast with the baseball bat, next time. John's with D'Argo -- where a hatch seal is covered in blue goo -- and wigs about his DNA, and Zhaan's just like, "Ask the analyzer, dude." He tells her to try again, and she tells him she needs another sample. "Oh yeah, no problem. Hell, the damned things are related to me." Aeryn asks John what's behind this seal that D'Argo's cutting into, and D'Argo explains that it's a hatch into the "ion backwash chamber." I love the ion backwash chamber. Crazy shit always happens in there. "Should be a giant empty room. The beetles have completely isolated it. All four entries are sealed. Pilot, we need that alternate entry," he growls, and Pilot says he's working on it. D'Argo tells John, confused, "Nothing can resist a prism laser saw!" John says it's not doing the trick, and that Zhaan wants some more bugs. "...Wants to check some unreliable data." Aeryn is now weird and rude: "Huh! The data's not the only unreliable thing around here." John's taken aback, and D'Argo explains the problem, which is a very scary problem we didn't know about: "Sebacean heat delirium. Sebaceans lack the gland necessary to regulate extreme thermal increases." Aeryn slides down the wall, thrown, and John draws a microthin line in the sand: "Wait, Crais and those other bastards chasing us are cold blooded? Literally?" Not Aeryn, just the "bastards." D'Argo characterizes it as "a weakness not enough of them die from." So they can die from it, huh? But not Aeryn, because he's seen the evidence that nothing can stop or injure or penetrate her. You can't even make her laugh! Just the "bastards." D'Argo's tired of waiting, and tells Pilot he's gonna start cutting. Pilot wigs on him as he starts, and a

DRD gets him in the leg. D'Argo yells at the little guy and even kicks him, and tells Pilot he had his chance. Pilot growls at him pissily, in that awesome Pilot way, and D'Argo keeps cutting.

John sits down next to Aeryn in the corridor, where she's getting all hardcore about busting open that hatch, and he tells her she needs to lie down. "No, I need to be left alone." He bites a thumb and gives her the puppy dogs, so she morbidly explains to him the science of heat delirium. "As our cells overheat, the nervous system shuts down: first short term memory, then motor functions. The last to go is long term memory." He says it's an ugly way to die, but that's not ugly enough for this show: "We don't die, our body lives on in that state. It's called the Living Death. It's the only time we kill our own for mercy." Figures the quality of mercy would only come up in something that awful. D'Argo finishes the hatch and looks inside, spotting...another bulkhead. This causes him to punch the wall, and then a bunch of creepy crawling and squealing from inside, and the lights start flashing darker and lighter.

-- Page 8 --

Around the corner, Zhaan fools with another valve. John comes around muttering to himself ("My DNA, my DNA.") and overexcitedly yells at Zhaan about how the giant space cockroaches are now eating out the lights. He begs her to tell him that her DNA analysis was wrong and notices that she's not working the valve right. He tries to get her to flip the switch, and looks at her, concerned. "Zhaan, it's making it hotter, not cooler." John reaches for it again, and Zhaan elbows him in the stomach and punches his face, and he drops. He looks up, and Zhaan totally slo-mo *barfs more blue bug goo* onto the valve. So gross. He's like, "The hell?" and she wanders off.

John joins Aeryn in command and conferences D'Argo and Rygel in on comm. "How do you say 'we're screwed' in your native tongue? Zhaan just beat the crap out of me, then spit up that blue snot that the bugs use. She must've been infected or something when she..." Aeryn's just staring, not listening, working the console. He moves her hair and touches her face, worried. "You're not sweating. Oh no, that... That's heat stroke." Pilot informs him that Aeryn's "initiating a thermal increase," and John tries to stop her, earning himself a head-butt to the face. There are four male characters, counting Pilot, and three female, counting Moya. You do the math. Aeryn turns back to what she was doing, and John tries to physically pry her away from the console. She head-butts him *backwards* and beats more crap out of him, and he realizes she's playing hardball. It's cool how she is basically using PK moves here, so you could think she's just going nuts. Pilot, helpfully, tells John to stop her. John grabs her by the ankle and then crawls up her body, working toward her arm. Which then *comes off in his hands*! So Gross! She starts squealing, like the bugs, and falls to the floor, dead. (Every time John's confronted with an Aeryn that's not what she seems, that doesn't love him, and his heart breaks, and he kills her, take a shot.) So of course then Aeryn comes into command, asks what the hell he's thinking, making it hotter, and then notices him rolling around with her dead body. He comes to stand beside her -- still holding dead Aeryn's arm -- and they look down at dead Aeryn, up at each other, and down at dead Aeryn again. Closeup on Aeryn, grossed out and unsettled. This show does the twin thing about every five episodes, and I love how it never fails to be this existential outrage for them. Hayley Mills could teach them all a thing or two.

-- Page 9 --

Everybody stares at dead fake Aeryn, laid on a table in the maintenance bay. "It was exactly like you!" John yells. "The way it moved! The way it felt!" Aeryn looks up at him with a really wonderful face, this mix of sort of half-sensual openness and total stone-faced denial. I've erased and rewritten that like a hundred times, but that's the best way to say it: hard, and soft, with a light dusting of WTF on top. "I mean it felt real. Alive. It looked and acted totally alive. It was...impossible to tell the difference." D'Argo's like, "But it was sabotaging the ship, which was a clue," and Zhaan -- because she's in control and knows everything -- pshaws. "He had no reason to suspect. This is a perfect duplicate of Aeryn's exterior, right down to the micron." Aeryn asks if dead Aeryn could talk, and he says she didn't, then turns to Zhaan: "Neither did you, when you attacked me in the passageway." Zhaan, because she's in control and knows everything, corrects him: "I was never in the passageway, John." He tells her about how there's also a fake Zhaan, and she immediately covers up the dead Aeryn, because it just stopped being science and started getting real. John figures that the first bug, from his room, was there sampling his DNA, to make a copy of him. Which is why they were centered originally in the living quarters. John and Zhaan get creeped out: "The perfect camouflage." "The perfect *army*." It's kind of sad how even Zhaan, now, is like: "Evil and must be destroyed." They have every reason to think so, now, but still, she could've been a holdout. It's got your DNA. Aeryn and D'Argo join in, realizing that there are potentially hundreds of bugs, and therefore hundreds of possible duplicates about to show up. "We will kill them all. On sight," grumbles D'Argo, and Zhaan asks how they're going to tell each other apart from the fakes. "We will cut off the tip of our small finger, for identification," he growls. John's not having that, although he does see the humor in it, and then he puts a little orange dot of spray paint on the back of their hands.

"Look, I don't care about replicants," says Aeryn. Ops v. tactics. "What we've gotta do is..." whatever the next thing is. Which she doesn't remember, because she's starting to go south with the heat delirium. "I had something to say, I know I did." Zhaan worries to John that they need to get the temp down bad, and D'Argo says the bugs have gotten blue goo all over the climate regulators. John asks, as a scientist, if they can create something to dissolve the stuff, and Zhaan says she'll get started. Aeryn, because this is the part where everybody says what they're going to do, says she's going to work with Pilot. Zhaan acknowledges her with a worried look, and Aeryn tells her to fuck off as usual, but this time without unkindness or any edge: it's just an update on where she's at, which is *very fine thank you*. John determines to go find the main hideout of the bugs. I see that going well, especially after Zhaan's well-intentioned "actions, not words" pep-talk.

-- Page 10 --

Rygel's again being used as an itchy-bitsy spelunker, again against his will, just like last week. Off his bitching, John smacks the wall, and the bugs scatter. Rygel complains some more, and D'Argo finally just tosses him in. Rygel whines from behind the wall, "Luxan manners never fail to amaze me," and D'Argo laughs evilly. John snorts at him, cutely. If I had my wish, they'd do this bonding over a Rygel fricassee, but I can say that I love Rygel's smallness, because it makes for more of this intimacy with Moya, which makes total sense to me. Only Moya has enough largeness of spirit to



love Rygel without even worrying about it -- of course he can crawl around inside her, while the rest of the cast can barely look at him sometimes.

Aeryn asks Pilot half a question: "If we can't turn the temperature down, isn't there at least some way to...stop it from..." Pilot's concerned. "I am a Peacekeeper," she says. "A Sebacean. Look." Her hand shakes mightily and she says a good, good line: "Can't hold a weapon. I can't hold a thought." Even now, at her extremity, it's still about the next attack. The just in case. Can you imagine if your whole life were constellated in terms of *the next motherfucker to shoot at you?* Seriously. Every line she's said in these episodes is like, "No way, we gotta run." And that's what being a Peacekeeper feels like. No wonder they're all such assholes. It's hard out here for a fascist! She starts breathing really heavily, and then Pilot cups one of his arms around her as she goes into a full-on seizure. It passes, and she pulls herself together, stands on her own. "It is strange to be...so close to a Peacekeeper I do not fear. That is a compliment," he clarifies, but doesn't point out that, for John at least, it's the point of the episode.

They've said that this is where he falls in love with her for real, but that goes to a funny place, feminism-wise, unless you go further with it, which is to say: this is where he realizes she *can be loved*. Not because she's a damsel, but because she's not an android. That the walls are capable of coming down. Or maybe John's just that kind of guy, which is fine I guess. Or maybe it's the same thing. Pilot floats the idea that, should he perform a full propulsion shutdown, he could vent the cargo doors to space. But Aeryn's still about running, like she always is, and rejects anything that involves stopping. "No! It's too dangerous, we leave ourselves open for attack." Pilot reminds her that they are, um, *already under attack*, and we see that the whole long-term/short-term thing isn't really D'Argo's problem at all: it's Aeryn's. It stops being ops v. tactics when the entire "tactic" is "keep running forever." Aeryn makes me so sad. She rests on the console as Pilot stops Moya and vents the cargo doors.

-- Page 11 --

Inside the ion backwash chamber, Rygel self-narrates over comms that he hears something, then gasps. Outside, John listens against the wall, and points out a particular location, which D'Argo then smacks really hard. Why are they doing that? That's so funny. D'Argo's like "Just trying to scare whatever's in there," and Rygel says it worked. Heh. John -- and the way he says it, you can tell he was standing there thinking about Aeryn Sun for a while before he spoke up -- worries about the heat some more. "Did you see the look on Aeryn's face? It was like she was staring at her own death." D'Argo says death is preferable to the Living Death; he's seen it before. John points to another spot, and D'Argo smacks the wall again, causing Rygel to bitch some more. I love that they're doing that. They're always so cute together, but this is really great. Especially since it's just business while they discuss this horrible thing. "They often beg for their own death," D'Argo says. "I cannot say I did not find the sight most enjoyable."

John asks if that means D'Argo's hoping Aeryn will die, and D'Argo softly explains something they've all kind of figured out but haven't admitted yet: "She was one of them. Now, she's a comrade. Like you." John calls bullshit, and starts insisting that D'Argo hates her as he hates all Peacekeepers, and that he wants her to die. He is very crazy right now! D'Argo shoves John against the wall and tells him to shove it. I

love it when D'Argo's the normal one. John doesn't look away from D's eyes the whole time. There's always such a physical energy between the two of them, but especially in these close scenes: I think the bulk and presence and tension of him really focuses John. "Listen, human. Everyone is frustrated. We're all hot. And we're all gonna be a lot better off if we stop just wasting time, and just fix this blasted ship." He lets John up, and John takes out his frustration on the wall, scattering more bugs and bitching at Rygel. D'Argo takes his side, kind of -- "The little wretch is doing the best he can" -- and John nods. "I know. In the meanwhile, Aeryn is melting away." D'Argo gets apologetic and tries to clarify: "The part of me that wants Aeryn to live is greater than the part of me that wants all Peacekeepers to die." John, still smarting and scared, takes off saying that's not worth much. "Well, it's all I've got," D'Argo says, following him. And we won't know for a very long time what that actually means. How much that cost D'Argo to even think about, or say, and how sad it is that John doesn't know enough to acknowledge it.

-- Page 12 --

Aeryn is sitting on the floor in Pilot's den, where he's been able to make it at least a few degrees cooler. There's a look on her face throughout, until she loses control of even that, that's wonderfully touching and sympathetic: this "oh, fuck" kind of quiet rage and sadness. Like, "I can't believe it got me." "It" would be her body. She's very grateful and sweet with Pilot, and tells him this isn't his fault, but Pilot -- way stressed -- names all the ways he's screwed and can't help her. "I cannot re-activate the consumable refrigeration unit. I have no place to bring your core temperature down." He voices his hope that the others will figure it out, and she laughs bitterly. Given the PK stuff, "why would the others care?" Pilot nods. You can't argue that one. It's a very lonely thing.

Rygel finally locates a nest, after crawling around inside the walls for awhile. There are eggs, coming out of the thing really fast, and some of them are already hatching more bugs. "Bad news, people," he whispers on comm. "Very bad news." John asks him what's up on comms, very very loudly, and Rygel screams that he's trying to get him killed, and that they were mean to toss him in the hole, and it's way too hot, and there's a nest. D'Argo's surprised by this last -- "Nest?" -- and I don't know if it's a microbe thing or just a funny little joke, but Rygel bitches: "Too many letters for you, Luxan? Try 'hive'!" It's less funny seeing the words on the page, I bet, but it works okay spoken aloud. John realizes Moya's being turned into an insect condo and Rygel announces that he will be moving out. Elsewhere, Zhaan figures out how to dissolve the blue goo, but just as she comms to them, a bug gets her through the neck with a huge stinger, and she goes down.

John screams, hearing her gasp, and everybody makes for med bay, and Rygel freaks out inside the wall. Pilot can't find Zhaan, but notes that Aeryn's losing consciousness in his den. She's shaking, and her breath is coming in shards. The DRDs poke at her and beg in beeps for her to wake up.

John goes to the hole where they shoved Rygel -- last heard screaming his fool head off -- and is surprised by a John clone, which drops from the ceiling behind him. The clone puts his hand on John's shoulder. He thinks it's D'Argo, and he turns around slowly -- the clone grows an orange spot on the back of his hand to match John's. They don't make out, at all, and that is very, very sad. John tries to talk to the clone,

who stares at him silently for a bit, and then beats him up. They have a very silly, very one-sided comic book kind of conversation: "*You know my moves. And I know yours.*" John realizes that the reason he got his ass kicked in seventh grade is that he fought fair. And it's interesting, because if somebody else said that to him, he'd shrug it off with some Jack Crichton speech about honor -- but here, he's telling *himself*. Tiny bit of innocence lost.

-- Page 13 --

D'Argo carries Aeryn onto command, still asking Pilot where Zhaan is. Pilot can't help with that, but he can offer the lovely news that "a growing number of bipedal entities" are now wandering the ship. "Who knows how many more there are," murmurs D'Argo, and John answers as he enters: "Infinite." He holds up his own dead head: "Minus one." I guess he stopped fighting fair. D'Argo asks how he can be sure it's really John, and John says that he's talking, so you know. "If they could [talk], they wouldn't tell you that these markings are useless." D'Argo asks John where Rygel is. John asks D'Argo where Zhaan is. Nobody knows. Nobody ever knows anything on this ship. D'Argo says there were signs of a struggle, and she's gone, and who cares about D'Argo or Zhaan or Rygel or even Moya, because Aeryn's delirious: "Did we pass the obstacle test? I don't want to fail Commando training." (a) Not for at least three more years, and (b) *Dude, we know. You passed. Flying colors.* Stop passing. D'Argo points out that they're getting isolated, and John says they've gotta find Zhaan and stick together. Rygel comms the yotz with Zhaan, he wants out of the wall. John asks for Rygel's 20 with an angry grin, and Rygel bitches about the bugs and stuff. "If I sit perfectly still, they don't advance. Yet, when I move, they get disagreeable." May I suggest the cha-cha? D'Argo suggests he stay still, and Rygel somehow summons yet more attitude: "If we ever survive this, Luxan, you must become my advisor!" Rygel lets them know that the thing is spitting out clones at a phenomenal rate, and we see slo-mo Johns, D'Argos and Zhaans stumbling out of the nest. I'm so tired of the slo-mo already! We get it! They are spooky! They were already spooky! John's like, "But we already lose, though, so why?" Zhaan interrupts him, shambling into command with the huge thing sticking out of her neck, almost laughing with the direness: "Help me. I can't, uh..." The boys grab her and she's all having vapors. "I can't get this stinger out, it's pumping some kind of venom into me." It's pretty worrisome. Of course D'Argo's like, "I'll cut it out!" and John reaches out to stop him, and then Zhaan changes. She's tall, and regal, and a little bit scary.

"I am Monarch of the Drak," says the lady. It was supposed to be "Sultana," for that vague Arabian flair, but Virginia Hey is Australian, and she was like, "Nigella said that means a golden raisin, and you are not calling me a raisin." Also, if you're a woman over 35 and let them call you a raisin, [Sela Ward](#) will come to your house for selling out the sisterhood (because a woman with her bone structure is in the ideal position to talk about the beauty of aging gracefully, because she WILL NEVER AGE). I don't know why I know that story, but I do know every time this episode comes up, I think of Rygel climbing up a uterus, and then I think of Zhaan, Queen of Raisins. "These are my aggregate," says the Raisin Queen, pointing at the fake D'Argo, John, and Aeryn walking onto command. "You attack me, during my Genesis, and you must die." Freaked-out John says to freaked-out D'Argo: "What the hell is Genesis?" D'Argo

draws his sword thing, and John grabs him. D'Argo just wants to chop her up, but John's like, "Actual Zhaan! Actual Zhaan!"

-- Page 14 --

Commercial, and then John's like, "Where's Zhaan?" Raisin Arizona is like, "She's my voice, and then I'm going to kill her." John finally processes the Genesis thing: the eggs and the nest. "This is some sort of spawning. And you're the Queen?" He stutters because he's never right and it tastes weird. "Life must continue." John continues to explain everything to us, about how the Drak live in space, but need warmth to lay their eggs, and then when she's done, they'll leave. Raisin Cain goes, "Right, so why are you being dicks?" John figures out that it was hunky-dory (except for making Aeryn even bitchier on the way to frying up her paraphoral nerve like a samosa) until he gave that poor bug a blanket party in their quarters. "We started this damn war!" D'Argo: "It's, um, still a war." John begs her to chill out, and apologizes, and asks how long this is going to take. I think Aeryn should be in this meeting, dude. "Time?" John's like, "Right. Alien shit again." She admits that she's currently about halfway through the birth, and John's like, "Excellent," but he checks out Aeryn's meltdown and is like, "Cool, but is the heat really necessary?" Of course it is. "Warmth propels the emergence." Heard It Through The Grapevine's all, "Oh by the way, how come Moya's not cranking it?" So John has to explain about Moya being alive and a nice lady, and how they're all going to die. D'Argo uselessly repeats how they need to kill everything ever before the Raisins attack, and Ruth Younger goes, "You are our enemy!" The Fauxdrenaline Triplets step forward in lockstep, and John explains that they're going to kill Moya, and then all of her kids will die of the cold. There's a faceoff and she thinks, then moves the clones back with her eyes.

Lacuna! John, D'Argo, Zhaan and Aeryn are now locked in a room while Raisin the Roof remembers her breathing and gets her *Pure Moods* on. That's such a John plan: "We're just going to hide in here, is that okay?" D'Argo removes the stinger from Zhaan's clavicle while Aeryn takes up a whole bed looking a mess. John sits beside her, worried. I wonder how much is love at first sight, and how much is just the fact that she looks human? It's interesting. Rygel comms that they are all fahrbot for going forward with a plan like that. "Yet another reason I should handle all negotiations!" And I mean, credit where it's due. The little bitch can handle that stuff for real. John unconvincingly tells him not to worry. "It's only a couple more hours." Rygel squeals that he's not into sticking around inside Moya's walls for a couple hours: "I think this thing is salivating! And my body has functions!" *Dude, we know.* If you only remembered one thing about this entire show, I guarantee it would be his motherfucking *functions*. He's got your DNA. John fills us in on how they have to stay put and Laura Raisin'll keep the heat down as much as possible, and quit with the creepy clones. Zhaan, re: Aeryn, is still quite upset but getting calmer. "I think we caught it in time. Any longer at that level and she would have suffered permanent damage. Let her rest, John. She needs to recover some strength before she's aggravated again." Heh. I love that, like Aeryn's a pet bunny at a birthday party and John's just going to keep picking her up and putting her down and strapping a bonnet on her, because he doesn't know what to do with himself. "Jesus, let the bunny take a nap." It's so, so true, and all three of them are so cute in that moment, because they all know it's true, and they all know why.

-- Page 15 --

John inquires about how Zhaan's doing, and she admits it's weird: "I can still sense her, deep inside...[it was like how] we're imprisoned in this room, with the rest of the ship just out of reach: I was within my own mind, yet I couldn't reach past, to think or feel what I wanted." Which is the best description of the not-so-nice stuff about Zhaan you're likely to hear, even if that doesn't apply here. John smiles sweetly at her that he's glad she's safe, and she gives him a bunch of wonderful, calm credit: "Now you've struck this truce, we're all safe." I could kiss her for that. John's so proud he *floats* back across the room to Aeryn, where he sits and remembers not to touch the bunny. She jerks her face toward him, still terrified by the boogeyman of her own body, and he asks if she's "feelin' better." (The accent right now, wow. Poor guy.) She's like, "No, actually still feeling hellish." He admits he doesn't know how long this is going to take, and caresses her cheek wonderfully. "We didn't cover the life cycle of deep space insects at JFK High." Everybody silently wonders what they *did* cover. Apparently simple levers and switches, for example, were not on the curriculum. Not freaking the fuck out all the time. Plans that make even a tiny bit of rational sense. Things they did cover: Giving Yourself a Hell Yeah, with Posturing Lab. Not Smacking Muppets. Sexual Tension Like To Kill Ya. Ass-Flattering Pants. That one, though, he did AP.

But what about the Marauder, you ask? Surely with Aeryn sucking on Crazy Death's toes, we need yet more problems. Commandos load out in Moya's docking bay, in slo-mo of course, and do a quick recon. Team Second, Kyona, uncovers the dead Aeryn body and recognizes it, and calls over her Team Leader, Lieutenant Melkor. Heh. Should've called her Caspar instead. Melkor checks out the body and congratulates it on escaping "a Captain Crais court-marshal." I fucking hate Peacekeepers. Caspar's like, "How come this Leviathan -- which is clearly the one that Crais is obsessed with, is hanging out with the keys in the ignition? It's not broken." A fake D'Argo appears and freaks them all out. It's hilarious how you immediately know they're clones, in this episode, because of the lack of banter. Normally, the cast cannot shut up for any reason. They tell him to chill, but he advances anyway, and they blow hell out of him. Melkor orders them to advance to command, shooting to kill as they go.

Our guys, still in the room, notice the heat's gone up again. Particularly poor Aeryn, who wiggles and groans and looks like hell: "Why?" Pilot informs them there's been weapons fire on board, and D'Argo and John both are like, "Wha?" Pilot tells them that Moya's not thinking too well right now, because of the Genesis, but that it seems to be coming from the maintenance bay, and then puts together the Marauder issue. He always sounds so freaked out. At least he always has a reason. D'Argo, predictably, goes into full-on wall-kicking growly mode, and John figures that the heat is happening because Sun-Maid thinks they welched on the deal.

-- Page 16 --

Another D'Argo comes around the corner on the five PKs, and Caspar yells, "Another Luxan!" because they all look the same to Sebaceans. Melkor remembers the brief, that there's only supposed to be one Luxan onboard. They're both right. They blow hell out of fake D'Argo #2, and a Zhaan comes up behind them, and when they shoot her she hits the bulkhead and slides down, smearing blue bug crap all over the place.

That was the one that freaked me out, even though I knew it wasn't her. Little did I know that they all manage to die in every single episode, like Kenny. If you had a nickel for every episode where we watch the entire cast die horribly, you could actually afford this show on DVD.

Back in the cell, John's trying desperately to contact the Raisin Queen. By yelling into the air. "We aren't the ones attacking you! Speak with me, dammit!" Aeryn whispers to him: "It's up to you..." He shushes her, tries to put her off, but she won't be quieted: "Before the Living Death takes hold, you have to be prepared to kill me. Promise." A world of no, for about a billion different reasons, but she gets him anyway: "Look, you said I'm not alone. A friend would do this for me." FOUL! "Family would do it swiftly." TOTAL FOUL! He cannot handle the idea of this conversation, much less actually having it. Me neither! John looks over at D'Argo, who made this happen with the power of the jinx.

Caspar mentions the heat as the Commandos continue toward command, and Melkor tries to switch a valve in the corridor, but is defeated by blue gunk. Sadly, there is no Delvian around to kiss him on the stupid forehead and give him something to prove. Melkor's convinced that "the prisoners" did it, as their only defense, and Caspar wonders aloud what the goo is. "We must resist," says Melkor, all flinty, and another Commando is like, "Fuck that." Melkor long-jumps at him and slams him into the wall. "I'll attribute that to heat delirium, Officer!" He shoves the guy toward command, and they continue. These guys don't even have a chance.

Rygel stands in front of the nest, on comms with John. I basically love the little shit here. "I can't do this. I can't." John's sorry, but there's no other option. The way it's shot, you don't really see how gross this is going to get yet, so you have to use your imagination as Rygel's like, "Do you realize how hideous this thing is?" Which: it's gotta be pretty bad if Rygel's grossed out. "You wanted to negotiate, now's your chance!" Zhaan (maybe a bit on the nose here) says to ask him what Rygel the First would do. John starts to ask, but Rygel just hangs up and turns his comm off. That's my boy. I couldn't be more impressed if he were capable of actual change or growth. Rygel walks regally (and CGI-liciously) up to a birth canal, meeting briefly with a bug at the entrance. It's all about the slo-mo and zany music, but this is actually a hugely symbolic moment, so I don't mind.

-- Page 17 --

"I am Rygel. Sixteenth of my lineage, Dominar of the Hynerian Empire. At once your equal, and your humble petitioner. Requesting an audience." (Not to get graphic here, but he just basically did the entire plot of ["A Human Reaction"](#) in a few seconds, complete with reconnect to the father archetype: I'm guessing whatever goes on in there, we won't see it happen, because it's his journey alone.) And he's right, it's pretty ooky unless you're really into biology, which I am really not: straps and flaps of skin, the Original California Raisin staring at him through the veils. The Grail, on a not-so-fresh day. After a few moments, the soldier bug grants him entrance, and he moves into the oogy area. We see his silhouette as he makes his way in to her. Somewhere, Jonathan Riker breaks out in a cold sweat. If you can make it through this episode, you're good to go. Feel free to be just as proud as Rygel in this moment.



John, panicked, just keeps screaming over comms, begging Rygel to reply, but it's just silence. He's so not ready for this jelly. There are tears in his eyes for Aeryn.

Commercial.

John's still screaming for Rygel, but D'Argo's like, "He's dead. She ate him." I'm so not even going into D'Argo's sex stuff right now, but: *man alive*. John's hysterical about how it was his idea, but D'Argo points out that the rest of them are still alive. Aeryn agrees with D'Argo, so John runs to mommy. "Zhaan, what do you think?" She flips out all Spicy Oatmeal again. "Monarch?" asks John, because the slo-mo can only mean one thing. Well, in this episode, five things, but he's right. "Silence," she commands. "I've got a Hynerian up me." He begs her to listen, but she just tells him to cram it while she talks to Rygel. "I will not be silent! You're killing her for no reason!" The meeting ends. "I have communed with your sovereign. He is most agreeable. I trust him." Good on you, Buckwheat. "Rygel is not my sovereign!" growls D'Argo, but John's like, hush. "Then you know we wouldn't hurt you." Raisinette's all Zhaan for a sec: "I know all." It's said with a grip of *gravitas* that shuts John up. He knows from holy stuff, I'll say that for him.

The commandos have reached the ion backwash chamber when a John clone arrives. Melkor takes it out, and some bugs show up, and there's lots of gunplay.

Zhaan screams when the soldier bug babies are hit. John begs her to let them out so they can help defend the homestead, sneaking a look at Aeryn. Every time you think she looks as assy as possible, she goes one better. "We can stop them," he pleads, and Raisin Helen takes a second, thinking, before she opens the cell door. The Aeryn guard outside steps back. "I will allow the thermal to lower," Swamp Things the Raisin Queen, and John tells her to wait, looking over at Aeryn. She locks eyes with him: "Do it." Man. She'd rather catch some Living Death than be keelhailed and executed, because then she won't have to look them in the eye. The depth and breadth of the PK thing is hard to pick up on, because you have to work backwards from knowing her, but consider this. The Peacekeepers don't even have parents: just the Peacekeepers. They don't have religion: just the Peacekeepers. They don't have friends or lovers or wives or husbands: just the Peacekeepers. They don't have yards with grass, or skies with clouds, or puppies, or diaries, or television, or manicures or [Buffy](#) or Taco Bell. Just Command Carriers. Fuck that up and you're not just fucking with your job: you're fucking with the entire universe. Everything is PK or not PK, and if you're not PK, you don't even really exist. And that's where Aeryn's at, and no matter how far you run, once you've fucked with the universe you're anathema to everything, including yourself. Normally I think chundering on about your honor is a pretty gay pursuit, but with Aeryn, I feel her. I'd rather die too.

-- Page 18 --

"Don't lower the heat," John says, nearly choking on it. "Crank it up." John and Aeryn nearly start crying, both of them, because it's going to hurt. Raisin of the Flag on Iwo Jima thinks a sec, and then cranks it. Aeryn cries out in misery, and Zhaan slowly collapses as she turns back into herself. She smiles at John and nods toward the door: "I'll look after her. Go." D'Argo comes near to Aeryn and looks in her eyes. He pats her arm tenderly. That is big. That is pretty neat. You expect John to get all pinkeye when Aeryn's involved, but the promise in that touch, from D'Argo, is one of the largest emotional leaps to date. John and D'Argo head for the door. "It's just you

and me," John says, going for the adrenaline, but D'Argo corrects him: "Actually, it is just me. And you." D'Argo heads out, but John comes back to Aeryn one more time, saying her name softly. "I feel the Living Death," she rasps, and he begs her to hold on. "I won't let it happen," he swears to her, but she reminds him it's not his choice. "Remember your promise," she says, as sternly as she can manage, and his face goes blank for a second before he turns and leaves. Aeryn groans, in the silence. Melkor shoves a female Commando; they're all feeling the heat. "Move!" They walk carefully around the body of a dead Luxan, in a puddle of *blue*, lying in the corridor -- how friggin' long does it take to get from the docking bay to command? -- and we see that it's D'Argo, watching with eyes nearly closed. When the fifth one brings up the rear, D'Argo trips him up, climbs on his back, and knocks him out. He grabs the guy's gun and retreats stealthily. Good plan.

Zhaan holds Aeryn under a shower, cooling her down. Aeryn stares and shivers, spaced out. "Pilot?" says Zhaan forcefully, keeping it together. "More pressure. Colder water." Aeryn mutters to herself. "Living Death. Crichton promised."

The Commandos are fully keeping each other standing, as they finally reach command. Caspar spots John and gurgles, because that's like all she can do. Melkor's barely standing, and draws on John, but then Caspar spots another John in another direction. "Sir?" she chokes, and then Johns are everywhere. If ever there were occasion for a "Hell Yeah," this is it, and it's so sad because they're dying of the heat delirium and can't even enjoy it. Especially now that the multiple Crichtons showed up, I bet the temperature is going crazy! Melkor swings wildly, not sure who to shoot, and then orders them to shoot all the Johns.

-- Page 19 --

Aeryn, under the cold water, is getting closer, mumbling random words. "Promise. Promise. Crichton?" There's nothing behind her eyes.

The real John walks onto command with his hands up, and then crouches beside Melkor: "Did ya ever have one of those days when life just ain't what you thought it was gonna be?" Shut up and beat his ass. "I killed you!" Melkor tries to shout, and John's just like, "Didn't help." Melkor fumbles and drops his weapon, barely able to stay upright. The other ones are just in heaps all over the place. "What kind of creature are you?" Melkor wonders. John calls this a good question, and then kicks the gun away. "Too bad Crais didn't ask that before he declared war on me." D'Argo shouts for John to clear his shot, but John claims Melkor for his own, and looks him in the eye. "We got two choices here, Peacekeeper. You can stick around, find out how hot it's gonna get. Or you can return to your Captain Crais." D'Argo senses a badness in this plan; John ignores him. Melkor shakes and laughs that John would even suggest letting them go. "Tell him he picked the wrong species to screw around with. He wants a fight? Fine. Look around. Take a good look around. And multiply that by thousands." The bad-assery of John Crichton is a rare jewel, but I like it. The quiet, scary voice. Melkor pulls a knife out of his boot as John's like, "Now, let's see about getting you home." Melkor jumps. He misses cutting John, but pins him against a wall, knife to his throat. D'Argo puts a gun to the PK's head: "I believe the human Crichton gave you a choice." John, high on crazy, tells Melkor to go for it. "Use your blade. And the next time Crais sees my face, his crew will be dead and he'll be staring up from a

pool of his own blood." JEEZ. Melkor, it's important to note, looks like Chris from [The Sopranos](#), only Australian and wearing weird eyeliner. He wobbles and falls. Some time later, the Marauder leaves. In a corridor, the DRDs are clearing up all the blue bug blood/vomit as John and D'Argo -- wearing some awesome red leather Doc-looking kicks -- head for command. "A brave gamble, Crichton," D says, and John's like, "You would have stopped him from stabbing me all up, yes?" And D'Argo says that there are two things of note: (a) "You risked Aeryn Sun's life." That's a biggie. And (b) it still would have been more fun killing them while they rolled around in the throes of heat delirium. That's not too sporting, D'Argo. John, the eternal optimist, is like, "Maybe Crais'll leave us alone now?" Which, no matter how crazy John gets, that's still less crazy than Crais on a good day. The "puddle of blood" talk is like flirting for that dude. But even as D'Argo's scoffing, John hums a little hope song to himself. "Small chance."

-- Page 20 --

He gets very loud with Rygel, all, "Big fella! You look refreshed!" and Rygel says that he took a three-hour shower. "I had blue crud way up in places you don't wanna know about!" John laughs and tells him he did a hell of a job. "Yes, well, there's a lot of Rygel the First in here," says Rygel. Cute little snort. He goes off about how if he had some space-age outfit of "shimmer-weave" fabric, he'd look exactly like his ancestor. Whatever. That's so sweet. Mostly it's just funny because he's like, "It would STARTLE you!" with this weird intensity, like maybe it would startle you TO DEATH!

Pilot pleasantly reports that the temp is back to optimum, and John's like, "Awesome, where's Aeryn?" Pilot directs him to the Terrace, a location we don't often see. Zhaan closes up Story A so we can head to Emotown with no leftover questions. "The Draks are leaving. Monarch wishes a final word with us." John and D'Argo give each other this hilarious look, like, at each other like, "Here we go with the creepy." The Monarch is pleased: "Genesis is concluded." There's only a bit of bite in John's response that they're pleased about that too. "We were also pleased by the encounter between us." John begins a judicious and diplomatic response...but of course, she's talking to Rygel. "We shall not meet again, Great Ruler." I love that there's no punchline to this. Think about how cool that is. It's not that the Raisin Queen is foolish, or that some interstellar translator microbe fuckup has given her this idea: it's just that we need to be shown how strong, and good, Rygel can actually be. He tells her that he's good with just this one Drak experience, and she smiles, and checks out. D'Argo and John catch Zhaan, who sighs and says they'll be gone soon, and watches the screen. She's so remarkable.

John walks Zhaan back to her room, supporting her, hushedly telling her to just lean on him. "Yes, I know I can," she murmurs. He drops her off, and she stops him: "I must say you handled yourself like quite a man of action, today." He says he's getting the hang of it, but of course that means that... "Things change," Zhaan smiles, "And you find you're more confused than you were before." Yeah. "Time and patience," she intones. Is that her answer for everything? "Yes, because it's always the right answer." True that, but the holes in it, we won't see for awhile. "Okay, how does time and patience answer this? We see the Draks -- or we saw them -- as pests. Something to be stepped on and crushed." She chalks this one up to ignorance; I just hate that they're saying this out loud. This is not necessary. "Well, I definitely pulverized one on

sight. And I would have done the same thing with the dentic, and those germ bugs that you injected me with..." The translator microbes. "But see, you see them as good," John says. Which is bad and dumb of him, because the last thing she needs is to be put on a pedestal like that. Not "how wise you are" but "how much *we've all learned*." Because everything she's going to say is terribly sad, because the one thing Zhaan can't do, which is balance her heights and depths, or see herself completely, is the thing she's advising us all to do. "Well, we have learned to work with them." John draws a metaphorical line about how one person's meal is another person's pet, and she just shakes her head, preferring not to think about that. "If you're asking for a distinction, I think it's often unclear. Moya is alive and she's our protector. She's also our servant. She relies on us and we rely on her. It's a mutual, symbiotic relationship." She tells him it's not all that arbitrary: "Reverence for all living beings. Which may come with..." *Time and patience*, he supplies, and she cutely says it along with him. I don't exactly love this as a catchphrase because it leaves out effort, which is her main issue: Time, patience, *effort*. "Why am I not enlightened yet? More time, I guess. More patience. I'm just going to sit on my blue ass and *think* myself holy." She smiles beautifully, because on the other hand, this episode and the next one are the most awesome she'll ever be. "Yes, John. I get the feeling you're going to get the hang of things soon." Another thing she's wrong about.

-- Page 21 --

John arrives on the Terrace, a lovely place we don't see enough, where Aeryn is crouched, watching the lovely Drak swarm into space. He stays back. "Remember me? Didn't we meet at a party a few years back?" She almost smiles. "Some of what happened, I can't recall, but almost everything else has come back." He asks how the shakes are going, and she holds up a hand. She's steady. "I'll be fine," she says, and stands. Vulnerability leaves these huge scars across her. That's such a fucked up concept to think about. John comes near, so she heads for the door, but turns. "You know. I always thought that lesser life forms were useless, just something to be squashed." Check out how this is her terrifying form of flirting, because she is crazy. John starts in on how humbling it is when you realize the Drak are just people like us, but interrupts himself with a smile. "You're not talking about the Draks, are you?" She grins sweetly. "Fine. Well, on behalf of lesser life forms everywhere, I accept the compliment." Which is a pretty cool elision: if the bugs are for stomping, then other races are for stomping, for the PKs, but realizing that symbiosis is just the nature of cohabitation in the universe, then this is a PK crossing that divide. Bugs are to people as people are to Peacekeepers. Yikes! But realizing that symbiosis goes both ways, she can make the even more fucked up connection: that without the lower races and lesser life forms, the Peacekeepers would be meaningless. There would be no peace to keep, just insane military commanders and their ponytails and magic boobs and Scorpius, tail-chasing and grab-assing across the galaxies. Without the lesser life forms, the Peacekeepers wouldn't exist. There's nothing particularly fresh about that master/slave deconstruction, it's everywhere from the Bible to *Godot*, but it's encouraging to see a PK come to the conclusion on her own.

Aeryn takes a long pause with hard eyes, asking permission of both of them to go on with this: "Could you have kept your promise?" She's near to tears. So is he. They don't speak. Her death is a wall between them and the only thing they can hold, which

is each other. John finally breaks the circuit, turns back to the screen, and she joins him; they watch the Drak in silence. It's harder to look at that stuff directly, when the heart that loves whispers "Live, live, live," to the thing it loves, every second of the day; to say, "Do you love me enough, does your friendship mean enough, does our 'family' mean enough, that you could take me out?" Rygel 1, Aeryn 1, John 0. Of all the icky things in this episode, John's the only one that gets to ignore the question. Even though we all know the truth: his love will always be greater than his strength. It has a name. You know its name, and you know the hateful face it wears. The minty taste of killing what you love most. (It's a regularly recurring motif, "Aeryn in specifically physical, mortal danger," and I think it has less to do with fairy tales and boy stuff than it does with this: the only thing that trumps survival, in the Hobbes world they all live in -- which, not for nothing, but he wrote about mostly in *Leviathan* -- is love. You'd save Aeryn before yourself in a second, which means that's the question they have to keep asking; it's the worst thing imaginable, and it's got your DNA.) As much as he's the only family he has left, she's already the star he steers by, because she's the closest thing to home: It's symbiosis. So he ignores it all, like a good boyfriend, and stands side-by-side with her, and not face-to-face. The answer means something to her, but nothing to him. It's not a question that makes sense to a John Crichton: you know his favorite character was Data -- and Aeryn's as close as he'll get to consummating. "You know, all things considered? There are worse ways to end a day," he says without looking at her. So she turns to look at him instead.

<http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/show/farscape/back-and-back-and-back-t...>

## ...And Wash Away The Rain

-- Page 1 --

There's a ship blowing up and Rygel wants to get lost and away from it, and D'Argo agrees. Zhaan wants to see if there are any survivors, in the huge green fireball in space, and Rygel, hilariously, gives her a "We'll pour out the forty later!" (But you know he really means he wants to have a drink in the honor of all their stuff.) I agree with Zhaan, but on the other hand, the Moya crew is just as likely to blow themselves up at any given time without aid, so maybe it's best to stay away from other people's drama. Pilot asks for a consensus, because he's the only one who gets that they're a team. D and Rygel repeat that they should be leaving immediately, and Zhaan's all, "Closer!" It's not a conversation, it's just yelling, which means that...yep, here's John now to "clarify" things. "Damn!" he says. Rygel doesn't give a damn who they are or what their problem is, and Zhaan explains that it's "subatomically disintegrating," and if the 'babble is an issue for you like it is for me, get ready, because there is a chick about to show up whose talking is so frelling annoying that you just want Zhaan to talk about quantum bullshit until the end of time. Or like, back and forth over from the end of time back to now, an infinity of times, just like the title says.

Man, I hate this episode. Just thinking about this chick is freaking me out with anger feelings. But. You get to see John admit that he is destined for craziness, you get your first taste of the whole PK Supremist/Constructivist symbolism and Aeryn being adorable some more; Zhaan's pretty awesome the whole time, and D'Argo finally shows off his own kind of crazy. But the guest stars make me want to throw myself off something tall, and the plot itself is like five spec scripts smashed into one thing, and the tech-talk is batty. But we hit the science v. war thing from yet another angle, which

is cool, and we get to see some sociological texture thanks to the Scorvian/Ilanic/Luxan issue (which is all very intriguing, but we never see it again), but the dynamics set in place in this episode reverberate for a long while. And these three episodes together form a kind of unofficial triptych in our relationship to the overall political situation: in this episode, we learn about non-Peacekeeper wars going on in the galaxy, next episode we see some Peacekeeper side projects, and then finally we get to see some normal Peacekeepers upfront. Whatever, it's a big universe and this is the smartest way to get a handle on the bigness. Not to mention that this episode is like the same exact thing as the miniseries, only upside down and backwards, which is kind of cool.

-- Page 2 --

Everything has a Schwarzschild radius, in layman's terms a gravitational limit, proportional to its mass. If something's smaller than its own Schwarzschild radius, it's a black hole. The Schwarzschild radius then becomes the event horizon, the line of gravity that surrounds the black hole, pulling you in. The good news is that the Schwarzschild radius of a sphere with density equal to critical density is the whole universe. Meaning that if you assign something a density that you can't look directly at, it will suck you in every time, but if you can see things as they are -- if you can taste the rain -- you get the universe in return. Aeryn's black hole has a Schwarzschild radius equal to the horrors she's perpetrated, and the ones she's let go on and on without complaint, and her own fear of the world outside; these episodes are her first tutorial. What's brilliant is that -- even in *PK Tech Girl* -- we never look directly at it, the action and the A-plot are always peripheral, and you -- like Aeryn -- have to do the math yourself. Which is the point: What's the difference between a black hole and a wormhole? A black hole has no point of escape: you hit the singularity and that's it, game over. But wormholes are two-way communication, two black holes (no white holes in this universe) joined up gap-to-gap. The difference is a voice calling back to you across that black gravity, saying "Come home."

But why are you talking about black holes and the Schwarzschild radius? Check out the ship in the screen, which has been steadily blowing itself up the whole time I've been going on and on. John notices the green energy surrounding the ship, but before he can ask what it is, there's a tiny ship onscreen, and Pilot sends them its transmission. We see two effed-up looking aliens, Ilanics, who are like Luxans but with longer, fruitier tentacles and horribly sing-song voices. I mean to tell you that you have never heard anything like the way these freaks talk. There's a girl one, who's a dead ringer for [Debi Mazar](#), with extra creepy. Her name is Matala, and her game is a little confusing. The other one is Verell, an elderly scientist who looks like Snarf's grandfather. Matala goes, "Please! *Help* us. Power's malfunctioning. *Life* support gone." That's all I'd need to hear, that voice, to drop their asses cold, but there's something going on with D'Argo's face where you know for sure that this is not going to happen. He abruptly switches stance and says to bring them aboard, Pilot grumbling all over the place about D'Argo's fickleness. "We have our consensus," says Zhaan, even though I'm sure Rygel would disagree, and Aeryn too. "Deploy the docking web." The easy rhythm of Zhaan and D being in charge, I love it so much, because he's young and she's old, and Rygel doesn't actually care.

-- Page 3 --



Aeryn and Crichton join D'Argo in the docking bay. His dander's all up, and she's looking, predictably, way stressed. The three of them board the shuttle. D'Argo carries Verell out, and Crichton picks up Matala, which is intriguing, because science v. war gets really mixed-up and blendy in this one. Murmuring comfortingly to Matala, John deposits her outside and goes back for more survivors, even though the thing's about as big as a Malibu and it's clear there aren't any. He gets smacked with some of the green electric energy, which travels from his hand to his head, and things go trippy. D'Argo comes back in and tells him several echoey times that there's no one else aboard. John is clearly in a state, all wacky-faced: "Yeah, I heard you the first time." Credits, as we consider what life would be like if John's ass were crazy. Zhaan and Rygel watch the Ilanic ship disintegrate outside. Zhaan complains some more about how there might still be people left. The thing goes up in green flames and Rygel giggles. "Not anymore." Rygel's pretty great in this episode.

Docking bay: Verell explains that they weren't even aware of any trouble until the "phase couplers" were just completely "overloaded," and then they had to bounce. He confirms that he and Matala were the only people on the cruiser. Matala moans at John about whether he's hurt. I think she's trying to be sexy, but (a) she looks like hell and (b) she talks like she's just slipped herself a mickey. John says he's "a little tingly," and assumes he touched something live, but Matala says they were all shut down. Guess he's "tingly" for another reason, but I don't think it's the reason she thinks. In a moustache-twirlingly creepy (but no less wacky) fashion, she tells Verell that the cargo is fine. "No *damage* to *containment*." Their Schwarzschild radius, the secrets they're not telling, are covered. So of course Aeryn's in there like gangbusters, asking about the cargo, and Matala totally scoffs about how she's not telling any Peacekeeper shit. John and D'Argo (very sweetly and cool): "We all have escaped from the Peacekeepers. She is one of us now." Aww. Aeryn's like, "Yeah, I'm in the gang, all very heartwarming, yadda yadda. What's in the box?" Verell corrects them -- he also talks the *stupid Ilanic* way, but not as awfully -- that it's more like "scientific apparatus" or whatever, and he says "apparatus" in a new way I've not before heard. It's not exactly like the Brit way; I don't know, he's probably Australian because he's a guest star on this show. Also, D'Argo says the word "again" in a really fucked-up way, and he says it a lot. Verell says they've been "studying deep space gravitational fluctuations," and that they were headed toward rendezvous with another cruiser when they blew up. He asks if Moya can take them the rest of the way, and without a pause D'Argo pledges that their ship is his. John and Aeryn grin, bemused, throughout all this, I think mostly due to the zany intensity with which D's been doing everything since he saw the Ilanics' transmission. Which is, admittedly, kind of hilarious and loveable in its shift-key screamology. Verell thanks him and D'Argo takes Matala to input the rendezvous coordinates. Matala pushes Verell into his chair and tells him to "rest and revitalize," then flirts a little more with John.

-- Page 4 --

Matala and D'Argo bounce; John goes into some kind of bizarre petit mal and has this totally icky vision of himself being molested by Matala from behind, with stupid noises, and her tongue going crazy. Disturbing, not sexy. He flips back to the bay, with Aeryn, and has kind of an ambivalent boner about it. Aeryn's like, "Dude?" and he doesn't know what just happened, but instead of saying anything about it -- which would be

weird, yes -- he babbles. She archly suggests he "rest and revitalize," and it's totally adorable, but he's not having it because he's too freaked out, so he just sighs and agrees, mind kind of blown. I hope that gross shit happens a whole lot more, because it didn't bother me at all.

In Command, Rygel starts in almost immediately about how they deserve to get paid richly for saving the science kids, and Matala's like, "Yeah, that was awesome when you saved us from getting blown up. Thanks on that one." Rygel pushes and D'Argo gets wild on him about how they're his "friends" and stop conning them, and Rygel laughs. So D'Argo grabs him by the eyebrow and twists (ignore it, things are already weirdly sexual as it is), explaining that Ilanics and Luxans are "genetic cousins," who've been "blood allies" for a thousand years. He begs the Ilanics' pardon: "His manners match his size." Pilot notifies them all that the rendezvous is twelve hours away (incidentally, this is also the amount of time that it takes for the Luxan mating ritual), and D'Argo offers Matala a snack. She says no, but asks him to help her get something for Verell. So it's like a date, or something. Twelve hours to go!

Aeryn, Zhaan, and Crichton are chatting about the Ilanics. Aeryn is, of course, dubious: "Do you actually believe someone would send a cruiser with only two scientists all the way out here just for research?" Zhaan is, of course, self-obsessed and superior: "There are many species who seek..." And John, of course, checks out. There's another horrible sex sequence with Matala, and he almost hurls himself across the room when he gets back. So you're thinking, pheromones or mind control or something, right? Good. Zhaan's like, "You okay, Tiger?" But instead of asking about this or bringing it up, he pretends it isn't happening. And there's a certain Schwarzschild radius pertaining to horniness going on with both of our boys, which has an elegant symmetry of its own. You've got a Luxan and a human, okay. And they're on this ship, with no other Luxans or humans to be seen. And they're guys, and you know how guys are. So that's maddening. But then out of nowhere, somebody shows up who's a "genetic cousin" of the Luxans, and she's reasonably sexy (there's a substantial amount of jiggle in her wiggle, although John's still got her beat there), and the amount of war v. science that surrounds her, the black gravity of her, is at the least a sexual disappointment to D'Argo. Now, if only there were somebody sexy onboard who was a "genetic cousin" of humanity, we'd have ourselves a...oh.

-- Page 5 --

Aeryn: "I just don't trust them. The female especially." John stutters, because as usual, Aeryn's a step ahead of not only him, but the plot. "She's clearly leading D'Argo around by his mivonks, and I think she's having some sort of affect on you." John calls this "BS" and protests that she's "an entirely different species," which is to say they aren't even genetic cousins -- there's no [Katralla kiss](#), no other side to the black hole -- and as he's about to say something that might be taken the wrong way by certain other ladies in the room, he has another one. This one is particularly yucky: Matala, hissing and moaning, holding John up against the ceiling, about to do something that...it seems painful, but she says he'll like it, and it looks like maybe she's going to eat him starting with his bellybutton and/or give him a blowjob. Any other day, I'd be like, "Let's see where this is headed," but I just cannot take Matala. "I'm gonna get some air," he vows, and walks off. Then the cutest thing ever, when Aeryn yells, "We

have air in here!" and then turns to Zhaan: "What is the matter with him?" And Zhaan shrugs: "...He is Crichton." Ha! (But also, "Aww." And I'm not even going to go off on the whole "we have air in here"/"we have *Aeryn* here" thing that just happened there, because my goal is to write ten recaps in a week, but isn't that cool or sad or sweet?) D'Argo totally interrupts Verell and then says he doesn't want to interrupt him, and Verell's like, "The only person I've been hanging out with for the last year is fucking Matala. Interrupt, please." D'Argo stammers cutely that some might think that situation would be like okay or whatever, and Verell chuckles. "You find her...desirable?" D'Argo immediately starts apologizing, and Verell points out that he's a billion years old, and they are "just colleagues." "If you *want* her, then by all *means* begin the Luxan Chase." (Tick tock, Ka D'Argo!) D'Argo dissembles and we won't know why for a very long time. (He's daring himself, [like with the Orican](#), but Chiana's going to actually be the red slice cutting through his Schwarzschild radius -- the reason she counts is that she's not a Luxan or reasonable facsimile thereof, just like Lolaan was, and because both this episode and "Vitas Mortas" are retarded and don't count.) Verell's like, "Whatever but she's totally sniffing your chili LOL."

-- Page 6 --

Speak of the chili-sniffer. Matala comes in and thanks D'Argo for letting them borrow his workbench. Um, you're welcome? "Are you repairing something?" she asks, picking up some kind of Luxan thingy. "Uh, building something." She deduces that it's a "shilquin," and we don't know what that is yet, and when we find out in four weeks, we'll wish we hadn't, because it's very, very heartbreaking. He's all, "You like Bendis too?" like they are soulmates, and she wriggles and undulates and is gross some more. "I've always taken special interest in Luxan objects. The workmanship is exquisite. Your hands are quite skilled." John comes in calling for D'Argo before she can single that entendre up for him, and John gets bashful when he sees Matala, because...you know how you might have a sex dream about somebody innocuous, like a coworker or something, and then the next day you see them and you want to put on all the clothes you ever owned and also a blindfold? Now imagine that person is a totally freaky Debi Mazar alien who's sniffing everybody's chili. D'Argo, adorably, gets very yelly and hail-fellow-well-met with John: "Friend! Crichton!" They are both so out of their minds, it's awesome. John begs D to come conference with him, and D'Argo hesitates and then follows him out. Alone with Verell in the bay, Matala hisses. "Trouble."

John asks D'Argo if Ilanics have magic chili powers like pheromones or mind control or something, "psychic Spanish Fly," because he's wiggling. D'Argo gets very huffy and wants to know what the problem is, and John shakes his head, reading him perfectly. "No, no no. This has nothing to do with you." He tries to talk about the sex stuff, mucking it all up as usual, trying to make it clear that this is not coming from his direction, and just making it worse and worse. "...It's real. I can feel her. I can touch her." D'Argo invades his space a little bit and orders John to remove her from his thoughts and stop fantasizing. John's like, "I'm trying," but D just growls and stomps off.

Flash, and John's got Aeryn suddenly there demanding to know where D'Argo is, and whether or not he's still puppy-dogging the Ilanics. He's disoriented, so Aeryn waves her hand around in front of him, then disappears. He wows some more, and then

Aeryn approaches, demanding to know where D'Argo is, and whether or not he's still puppy-dogging the Ilanics. He's disoriented, so Aeryn waves her hand around in front of him. "Did you hear me?" He's like, "Yes, dude. Twice." She pronounces him "odd" and takes off. John starts talking to himself, like always. "That just happened. That was real. That happened. Which means...I'm not hallucinating. So if I'm not hallucinating, then...I'm seeing the future." Matala shimmies past in the corridor and gives John some amount of heat. "Oh, boy. That's the future." [Fight the future!](#)

-- Page 7 --

John gives himself the Oh God face in his bathroom mirror, and then flashes to the bay, where Verell's just been royally shanked. D'Argo rushes past him, to check Verell, and behind them, Matala creeps up, snapping first D'Argo's neck and then John's. Back to his quarters, where he tries valiantly to counsel himself: "Get a grip, man. You don't know you've come unstuck in time." Somebody screams.

John catches D outside the bay and begs him not to go in. "Matala's in there and she's gonna try to kill you. Me. Us. And stab Verell. I don't know, she might have already done it." D'Argo admits to being disgusted by "this clumsy ruse," and I have to say I'm kind of disgusted by this clumsy plot point, because Matala's not actually doing anything to D'Argo, so why's he being so stupid? I've never dated a Luxan. Maybe it's just that easy. John begs him to listen and D'Argo just storms around about how bad John wants Matala. "Look, open your ears...or your tentacles...or whatever orifice it is you listen with. I think the woman is dangerous." The thing about femmes fatales is that you are supposed to want to bone them, and that's what gives the archetype power. I don't even want to *look* at Matala, I just want to smack her. Verell comes out of the bay, into the hallway, and expositis that Matala's off with Aeryn. *That* should go beautifully. D'Argo offers Verell some tea and they take off back inside to drink it. John, alone: "This is not happening. It's not. It's just not happening."

Aeryn and Matala are walking down a corridor; Aeryn's thanking Matala for joining her. Matala says she's *really* in the *mood* for some *physical activity*." Aeryn avoids bitch-slapping her for talking like that, but she's really just biding her time. They bump into John, and Matala explains that they're going to "partake in some physical conditioning" together. John's glad, because that means they'll be down in cargo bay for a while working out, which means he has time to...do whatever he's going to do. Clearly the plan doesn't involve the correct measure of telling anybody besides D'Argo what's going on in his pants, his mental pants I mean, so I don't know. Aeryn snidely says they'll be down there "as long as [Matala] can keep up." Matala fronts awesomely, as though to say "About this long, bitch," and takes John's hand roughly in hers. "How's your hand?" The way she did it was very abrupt and kind of scary, but certainly made the point. Aeryn takes off without her, calling over her shoulder, and Matala drops his hand. John takes off in the opposite direction, rubbing his hand on his pants in a very funny, kind of OCD-furious way. I know, right?

-- Page 8 --

Rygel is gorging on food cubes in the galley when Zhaan enters. "Zhaan! Did you see how much food D'Argo gave those Ilanics? Well, he's not getting my share!" So he's apparently going to eat all his share at once, which somehow makes total sense, actually. "Rygel. You've been aboard Moya longer than anyone else except Pilot. You know her sounds and her rhythms. Just stop and listen to her for a moment." Wasn't

she also onboard for like 900 years? I mean, it's a good scene, and I like the idea, and I like the line. And I really, really like the way everybody secretly understands that Rygel has a basic symbiosis with Moya that goes beyond his years aboard. Just seems like Zhaan would take the opportunity to go on and on about how only she *really* knows what's going on with Moya, because only *she* is sensitive enough to Moya's sounds and rhythms in a some kind of loving womblike womanspace or whatever. Vegetables! Rygel gives it a good two seconds and then goes back to eating: "Moya sounds fine." Oh, here we go: "Does she? Not to me. Something feels...out of balance." Um, it's obviously the "phase disruptors" or whatever. Come on.

This next bit is both good and bad, because it provides a major plot point for the episode, gives you some serious visual symbolism about the Peacekeepers and Aeryn herself, and is wonderfully done. On the bad side, women always fight over men, never on their own terms, and when you call each other sluts and whores that only makes it easier for guys to call you that too. On the other hand, though, it totally fits the horniness quadrille described above. I think my issue is that it's plot, not character, driving the conversation -- the show wants us to compare and contrast the sexuality of Aeryn and Matala, so it sticks words in their mouths. I bet it was hard, as an actor, to do some of these lines. The squared circle in which their "physical conditioning" is a mat, maybe six yards on a side, emblazoned with the Peacekeeper emblem. Which we've seen before, but it's never taken up the whole screen, so let's get that out of the way. The [PK symbol](#) is taken from [a Third Revolution Russian agitprop poster](#) from 1919, and people get really excited about it because it's one of maybe five things that even if you're completely disinterested in this stuff, you have to pay attention to it, because the way it's used is always choreographed to an almost balletic extreme. It's a red Communist wedge breaking through a white area, into black. The black space into which it's intruding is soft and curved, the red wedge is pointed and hard. Okay?

-- Page 9 --

So Aeryn and Matala stand on the mat and assume lovely, angular stances, and begin to fight. "I suppose Peacekeepers don't need to know that much. Their females have no need for science or culture...even the art of attracting males," says Matala. See what I mean? They're evenly matched, so it's not like she has even a competitive reason to start by calling Aeryn ugly and frigid. Aeryn stands on the red wedge, Matala in the soft white place. "Unlike females who can only achieve their goals by seducing male after male?" She knocks Matala's shit to the floor, and then helps her up. "I guess we both have our unique talents." See, introducing girl weirdness into this just confuses the issue, because it makes Aeryn seem like she needs to become a woman. That's not it at all, she needs to become a *person*. I mean, still, it's meant to reverse the D'Argo/John stuff (Matala is a real woman, Aeryn is not; but really it flips and Matala is a lie, Aeryn is the truth) so it works on that level, but it's weird when all of a sudden you see Aeryn get pulled into some kind of Betty and Veronica bullshit out of nowhere. Especially since she's already said like five times she's jealous of the weird sex vibe going on with Matala and John. I guess she's allowed to be jealous. I don't know what my problem is. I think I just hate Matala and I hate this episode and I love Aeryn, and that makes me what? Biased. "Are we through here?" asks Aeryn,

since the scene has served its entire purpose, as far as we know, but then Matala does this kind of terrifying cobra scorpion thing with her hand in the air, striking down on a shoulder nerve, knocks Aeryn out. "I thank you for the exercise," she says, and stalks off. And she's not talking like Matala anymore. She's talking like a hissing horrible snake. It's just as obnoxious but it kind of apologizes for the other voice.

Matala's interesting, I *guess*.

Back to an overhead shot: Aeryn unconscious, almost completely contained within the red PK wedge, one hand thrown over the line and into the white. It's the percentage of her that's so far out of her black radius: the hand he's holding. And as though that wasn't enough of a slap to the head that you should pay attention (no camera angle is by accident; it's weird how you eventually have to realize that nobody ever just dropped the camera and let it roll, except student filmmakers), one leg is cocked up (there's a discontinuity here as well, slightly, that tells you she was positioned this way for the shot and I'm not always making this shit up): Trump XII, the Hanged Man. (Originally "the Traitor," okay.) The Hanged Man's about going through turmoil and storm in order to change: not because you're strong enough to ask for it, but because the universe demands it of you. The saint who looks demonic, unrecognizable, anathema to the people she leaves behind, heading out of the red and into the white, dragged by that one tiny hand. The woman becoming something different, something better; the woman dying in her change. The woman just beginning her tutorial. The woman who could be more.

-- Page 10 --

Not even this bullshit episode, dude. Not even this one is without beauty. Zhaan approaches Matala in the corridor, asking if she can remember any tiny symptoms of trouble before their cruiser exploded. Matala gets pissy but still talks with a xanbar up her ass, repeating that there was nothing "until the phase couplers overloaded." Zhaan presses her about it, and Matala finally tosses her hair, all "What does it *matter now*? Our *ship* is *gone*." Zhaan totally calls her worthless: "Perhaps Verell will help." Matala's all, "Fabulously whatever. Hey's what's up with Crichton's chili?" Zhaan rocks so, so hard here: "*Far* too complex, I'm afraid, for you to know in the short time that you'll be here. I suggest you shouldn't try." Talk to me in a week, Blue. That rocked! Rygel is...still eating. I really like him this week, and I'm starting to wonder if it's just that he's used so surgically (and so sparingly!) in the story. John comes in mumbling crazily. "D'Argo and Matala...Matala...I can interrupt these future events...I gotta..." He talks to Rygel, in the way that he looks at Rygel and seems to be addressing Rygel, but not so much in the way where he makes sense. "I need to keep people from...from seeing each other." Rygel asks if it's really necessary for John to "gibber" while he's eating, "or at all," and then flashes to the bay, where Verell's just been royally shanked ("Damn."). D'Argo rushes past him, to check Verell, and behind them, Matala creeps up and John grabs her by the cobrasnake, all, "I don't think so!" but then he flashes back to the galley, slamming Rygel's face into the table. Hooray for the future! Rygel chokes on the food he's still downing, and Zhaan comes in demanding to know what the hell is going on with John. Finally. He's like, "This is gonna take a lot of explaining." Which perhaps wouldn't have been true if you weren't so scared of your own lovely pants.



Matala, Verell and D'Argo are in the docking bay, where we're adding another layer to the proceedings: D'Argo's about to end up having to keep a secret, which means half the time he's being weird, it's not for the reasons that John thinks, which when combined with the time stuff means that he ends up with not a lot of personal reality either. Which is fine -- I really don't mind when the characters get suborned and shoehorned into John's story -- except that this episode is pretty much *about* D'Argo, from a plot standpoint, so he's doing like triple duty: antagonist, protagonist, symbol. Verell admits to D that they weren't doing research so much as field-testing a new weapon. How'd it work? You saw how well it works. The whole thing is a war between the Ilanics and the Scervians that started three years ago, that D'Argo didn't know about because he was in jail on Moya. I don't know if this ever comes up again, but I do know that we will never, ever see a Scervian. Which is fine, because they are apparently assholes. Matala admits that they didn't immediately understand that the containment field was necessary -- which is either stupid or a total lie, considering what the weapon is made of -- and that it was the breakdown of their cruiser that helped them understand they needed to shield it. "Luckily," says Verell, "we were able to save the weapon. It's in our shuttle." Which is where you say, "How about we just kind of shoot you toward the rendezvous point and we never, ever talk again?" But D'Argo's dumb this week. He at least asks if that puts Moya in any danger, and Matala says the containment field will protect her, and everybody else. There was a condom machine in a bathroom in Liverpool that said something like, "Safety tested and verified by the British Government" or whatever, and somebody had graffitied underneath that, "So was the *Titanic*!" I always think of that in these situations.

-- Page 11 --

Instead of taking this new opportunity to toss them out, D'Argo whines about how he feels like they don't trust him or they would've told him this before. Verell says, nonsensically: "You are a Luxan but you also are...were...a prisoner. We cannot be certain of your loyalties." Like, if they're to evil? What does that mean? D'Argo's like, "Are you over it yet?" and instead of answering the question or anything, Matala backs up to the beginning of this paragraph talking about how *even though* the containment field is rockin' awesome, and *even though* everybody's in no danger, it's still worth it to kill Moya with the weapon if that's necessary. "Whatever the risks to the ship, it must be taken. Without this weapon, millions more Ilanic lives will be lost." Which is not only not an answer, but also negates the last answer, not to mention how at the beginning of the conversation they admitted to both lying and being creepy. Instead of asking questions about the six different kinds of shady they're being, he assures them they can count on him.

Things go nuts right about now. John sits in Zhaan's quarters and picks up a blue glass mask from its pillow, on a cabinet. It looks like her. I don't remember if we ever find out what it's for, but for some reason I think it has spiritual significance. Well, specific to the Delvian Seek, not the regular kind (It's always masks with her: Stark's, even the Doctor in "Die Me, Dichotomy," but if I talk about why that is I'll get more hate mail, so just whatever. Duh.) She tells him the concept of "future flashes" is fascinating, and you can see her in total [Melfi](#) mode, like, "If you believe it, and it does sound interesting, that's important enough to believe you" or whatever. John laughs and admits maybe he's just actually going "bonkers." "...I guess it's about time for that

to happen," he mumbles, and it's a thread running all along the bottom of the story here: the inevitability that strangeness will accrete and he'll just lose his shit. It's funny right now. Zhaan says that if it's true, he should just be able to alter the events and thus change the future. He thought of that already -- "Just lock myself in my room and wait for them to leave" -- but that his presence isn't the problem: "But Matala could still murder Verell -- and D'Argo -- if that's what she intends to do. I just don't know why she would want to kill us. I don't know what the gain is..." Overstimulated, he drops the mask, and it shatters. As does her face. It's a very Connecticut moment; she's like, "No big whoop" as he's apologizing, but you can tell she's bummed. At least it's not about what a jerk he is this time, it's just awkward. John brings up her trepidation at Verell's explanation for the phase imbalance, and she admits that it gives her pause, so John says it's time "the old goat spilled his guts."

-- Page 12 --

John storms into the bay yelling for Verell, "You've been lying to...uh..." Matala's alone, asking calmly *why* he would do *that*, and he shouts for Verell. "You need to calm down...rest and revitalize. I have a technique that just might..." Yuck. John grabs something heavy and tells her to back off. He calls her "Nature Girl," which is funny, and demands to know what really happened to the cruiser, and why she's going to kill Verell. Matala drops, and we swing around on why: D'Argo enters and draws the Qualta, seeing John standing over his girl with a big stick. "D'Argo, *help* me. He *knows* the *truth*. He *threatened* to tell the *others*, make them turn *against* me unless I *pleasured* him," and all that. John denies, and D'Argo runs him through just as Verell enters, asking D what the hell is going on. Matala totally kills Verell and D'Argo. The mask reverses in time, coming together in John's hand. Zhaan says that if it's true, he should just be able to alter the events and thus change the future. He tried that already -- "I just did, I changed the future and I made it worse!" -- and, overstimulated, he drops the mask, and it shatters. As does her face. It's a very Connecticut moment; she's like, "No big whoop" as he's apologizing, but you can tell she's bummed. At least it's not about what a jerk he is this time, it's just awkward. "I'm ... sorry," he says, and she tells him it's all right. "Again," he says grimly.

Commercial, and then John's crushing the pieces of the mask in his hand, frustrated: "This time instead of Matala snapping my neck, D'Argo skewers me with his Qualta blade!" He realizes that the Ilanics have something on D'Argo, and Zhaan offers to speak to him, which pisses John off: "Talk? What, to give me a character reference? I just felt the blade slice through my guts! Okay?" Aeryn runs in shining bright, actually excited and smiling: "I just found something out! Matala is not Ilanic, she's Scorvian. Her Ilanic appearance must be the result of genetic surgery." She stands, proud and akimbo, as Zhaan asks how she knows. "She *fighters* like a Scorvian!" Problem-solving and fighting: all mixed-up and bendy in this episode, but also for once Aeryn's figured out something instead of being the muscle, and it's all over her face. John's amazed: "The workout -- you set that up? You saw her moves? You saw the..." and he does the scary cobrasnake move. Aeryn cocks her head. "Scorvian Neural Strike, yeah. How do you know about that?" John sighs: "Saw it in the future." She asks what that means, and instead of telling her -- because I think of the whole sex radius thing he can't look at -- just says it's a long story and they can discuss it later: "Of course, I'll probably be dead three or four more times by the time you ask, but ..." Heh. Aeryn

gives him the usual WTF but Zhaan interrupts. "Crichton is right. We may not have much time. If Matala truly is a Scorvian agent, then perhaps she is only with Verell to spy on him."

-- Page 13 --

John's like, "If by *spy* you mean shank! Why doesn't anybody ever listen to me? And also, they're not doing research, they are doing Bad Science, and D'Argo's in on it!" Aeryn goes all Solution = Rifle and offers to beat them up, and John points out that D'Argo is currently smoking Ilanic jock. Zhaan suggests that they split the three of them up and talk to Verell alone -- and now Pilot interrupts. These people and their conversations. "Zhaan...I thought you'd want to know, the phase imbalance in Moya's converters is getting worse." Of course it is. But Aeryn, still high on smartness, is adorable: "If there is a problem with Moya, perhaps D'Argo would be helpful in tracking it down?" Zhaan calls him to command, working as smoothly with Aeryn as usual, and he comms in that he'll meet them there. John predicts that "one of the noodle heads" is going to come with D'Argo and talk about how the phase imbalance is totally insignificant, and Aeryn confirms that at least one of them will stay with the shuttle, because of the super-secret fake research. "That would be Verell," says John. A scientist. "He's not gonna leave his work, watch."

D'Argo and Matala are in a cargo hold somewhere between Verell and command, and Matala's all about how the imbalance can't be significant and they are a bunch of babies. John hides behind some crates and listens. (Bad idea, but only because the sexual mirroring between himself and D'Argo means that nine times out of ten, he's going to end up accidentally seeing D'Argo getting off, and then have a fight with Aeryn.) D asks Matala why they can't tell the whole of Moya about the phase imbalance being totally okay, and Matala says they'd just pry into the fake research. "The Scorvians are devious, but I can assure you that no one aboard this ship is a Scorvian spy," D'Argo promises. Oh, D'Argo. She shoves him against the wall all sexy-like, and asks him to join the Ilanic fight. He tells her it's not that simple, and she grabs him by the tenka and starts yanking on it, which causes him to go slightly off. "Is it because of your *crimes*? Verell *told* me. He and I have no secrets." D's like, "Nobody on this ship, including Verell, knows my real crime." And you're like, "What?" And Matala's all, "No problem, because that's the Luxans' issue, and then she grabs him by the mivonks for real and tells him "*war* does not *recognize* multiple *loyalties*," and then she goes for a little handjob. "There is *only them*...and *usssss*." She's about to start in for real on the job at hand, and Zhaan calls for him again. "*We* should *gooooo*." D'Argo's like, "Rassinfrassin fuck it." Poor D'Argo. Poor D'Argo's dick. They head out.

-- Page 14 --

Verell tells the approaching John to leave him the hell alone, and John tells him to come correct because they aren't doing research, they're doing creepy Bad Science, and he also knows they are fighting the "Scorpions," and Matala is one of the Scorpions, and also she is going to kill his old ass dead, so what about that? Verell's like, "You're nuts," and John's like, "And yet. Your science weapon will thusly end up with your slutty enemy, so you tell me." Realizing that he sounds even more nuts than he should, he reminds Verell about the crazy green science that went in his forehead and explains that now he can see the sexy future of death. Verell's like, "Makes

sense." What? "Temporal dislocation. Entropic oscillations. Anomalous phase signatures. That would account for the dislocation you are experiencing." John's like, "Which was worse? Crazy or 'entropic oscillations'? Because if I am not crazy, that means I'm going to get freaky with alien Debi Mazar." Verell's not interested in explaining why this is the first thing he thought -- because it has to do with the scary nature of the secret science -- so he changes the subject to his impending death. "What exactly did you see in the future?" John's more interested in the thing in the shuttle, and pushes again: "Exposed to what?" Oh, nothing really. Just a *quantum singularity*. John shifts, of course. But it gets interesting.

"A black hole?" he asks. "A minute particle of one, yes. Its power and application are unimaginable. It is the ultimate weapon." (Sound familiar? When he brings peace, it won't be through war, and it won't be through science.) "You capture a piece of a black hole, and you're gonna to use it as a weapon?" Oh, the horror on his face. Verell points out that the survival of not only the Ilanic species, but also his own ass, now, kind of depends on it. So of course now that we're getting somewhere, fucking Matala shows up, with D'Argo. Having overheard the part where Verell mentioned the possibility of Matala going all cobrasnake on him, Matala and D'Argo get very defensive and start yelling. Verell admits that John said she was a Scervian imposter, and she totally doesn't even front, just gabbles a second and then cobrasnakes D'Argo. "Aeryn, now!" shouts John, and drops.

Matala starts firing the Qualta all crazy, John begging Aeryn to get her ass into the bay, and Matala kills Verell, nabbing the secret science and boarding the shuttle. John checks on D'Argo as Aeryn finally enters, yelling that Matala sealed the doors so she couldn't get to him. The shuttle gears up and heads out of the bay, but before John can stop her, Aeryn fires directly at the shuttle, because obviously that's what she'd do, because that's how she rolls. Talyn would be proud. Either of them. Just outside the bay, I think, the shot hits right and the shuttle goes all greeny-scary and starts shooting green science all over the place, and John is engulfed in black hole, and the Ilanic shuttle vanishes in the black hole, and then Moya, everything pulled into the center and nothingness.

-- Page 15 --

Zhaan says that if it's true, he should just be able to alter the events and thus change the future. He tried that already. He holds the blue mask in his hand gingerly, pushing a stool away with one foot like it's a bomb about to blow. He places the mask on the floor and stands above it, and treads directly on it, knowingly, watching himself. And takes a seat. The key is D'Argo, something about D'Argo and masks. Every time, it's the divided loyalties between John, D'Argo and the Ilanics that give her the upper hand. Trying to explain the mask to D'Argo just sets him more comfortably at her right hand. If it's not sex, what's the Schwarzschild radius that we're not seeing? What turns this black hole into a wormhole? Where does D'Argo's loneliness come from -- loneliness of such gravity and blackness that his reflexes can't react, and he blinds himself to everything around himself? It's not planets he misses, it's people. It's not his dick, it's his heart.

Aeryn runs in shining bright, actually excited and smiling: "I just found something out!" John steps on her balloon -- "Matala's not Ilanic, she's Scervian in disguise" -- and Zhaan's like, "Huh?" Aeryn stands, no longer proud, as Zhaan explains that John can

now see the future. "The *future*? He can barely function in the present," Aeryn bitches. She was so happy! [Fight the future! More!](#) John catches everybody up for us, sighing loudly the entire time. Aeryn goes all Solution = Rifle and offers to beat them up... "Doesn't work." Zhaan suggests that they split the three of them up and talk to... "Doesn't work." Pilot interrupts. These people and their conversations. "Zhaan..." John thanks him for the phase imbalance update he has yet to give. Pilot vows and John tells everybody to shut up. "D'Argo is the key. As long as he is with Matala, the timeline keeps getting worse and worse. We have to talk to him. Alone. We gotta get him away from Matala." She's not the other end of a wormhole, she's just another black hole. The key is D'Argo's loneliness. "We cannot ask him to come up to command and deal with the phase imbalance," he says, answering Zhaan's next question, "Because he's gonna bring Matala with him. We have got...we gotta try something new."

How about Moya's own Hynerian Schwarzschild radius, for starters? The Ilanics and D'Argo are doing...something...when Zhaan enters: "I'm sorry to disturb you, D'Argo. But could you speak to Rygel?" D'Argo's like, "Now what?" He's written a bill for the rescue and transportation of the Ilanics, of course. "He intends to present it...when we rendezvous." Verell's like, "Rude, but doable," and D'Argo freaks out and storms off to show Rygel what for. It's still for show, he's still acting too hard and talking too loud and being too ideal and I am guessing that this is all part of the Luxan Chase, and it is wonderful. Even when it's getting in the way, it's really cute. He storms into some other chamber, where Aeryn, Zhaan and Crichton are waiting to spring the most leather-clad intervention in all of space history.

-- Page 16 --

Matala watches Verell working; he confirms that the "containment field instability problem" isn't really a problem, again, and asks how long until the rendezvous. "Sooner than you *think*," she hisses. I love how whenever they're alone she acts fifty times creepier. No wonder he doesn't like hanging out with her.

Galley, where D'Argo's resisting the idea that John is seeing the future. "He is convincing enough," says Zhaan, sweetly, and Aeryn says that at the least they should be subduing Matala. I can believe ignoring John, because he is a fuckup, but I would think fighter brotherhood, and Aeryn's undetectable humor, would help D'Argo understand that they're not screwing around. John, very hyper, says they need to get the shuttle out of Moya immediately, and he's very sincere with D'Argo: "Listen, D'Argo, I wish to God Matala was telling you the truth, that you could go off with her and join the Ilanic wars --" D'Argo doesn't know what he's talking about, and John remembers that was in a vision. "Look, Matala's going to offer you that, to keep you off-balance, and to distance you from us." D'Argo wigs, of course, and says it's the other way around. Zhaan begs him to chill out, and he keeps screaming, and then John gets awesome. He barks at the ladies to leave, over D'Argo's protestations that there's nothing to talk about, and they leave the boys alone.

"There is nothing you can say to me that --" D'Argo starts, all Qualtafied, and John tells him to shut the hell up. "In that future conversation when Matala offers you to go to the Ilanic wars, you tell her it isn't possible. You tell her that your crime, the crime that you were imprisoned for, would stand in the way. And not the crime that you told us, not the crime that you *say* you were imprisoned for, but the real crime. The crime

that you've been keeping secret from everybody aboard this ship." D'Argo stares at the black gravity of this; the love between the two of them, the way that John hates that he has to do this, turn D'Argo around to look at the radius of what's pulling him down. Not looking at it because he's strong, but because the universe demands it. "How do you know that? You can't." But he can. Apologetic and loving, eyes bright: "Oh, I do know. And I'm telling you the truth. D'Argo, Matala is the enemy. Look, I'm sorry."

Later, Aeryn notifies John that something's coming, and John says it's the Ilanic cruiser. Pilot's surprised again, because they are still not close to the rendezvous point, but there it seems to be. Aeryn points out, with D'Argo's eyebrows knit, that "like Matala," it could be "Scorvian on the inside." Ouch. John asks how long until they can starburst, and Aeryn says they'll be in the cruiser's gun range long before that. Zhaan asks if they can outrun her, and Aeryn says they can't, but she can outmaneuver the cruiser long enough to keep them safe. So awesome. John tells Zhaan to distract them and get chatty on the transmission, and even D'Argo joins in: "Scorvians look nothing like Ilanics! If they refuse to make visual contact, you have your answer." He's still pissed, but hey! Look at that! All of a sudden the four of them are working in concert, supplying what they've got to supply, and that's never happened before. Fighter, planner, flyer, speaker. That's the opposite of loneliness, the white hole on the other side of D'Argo's fear, the thing that was keeping all four of them divided -- this week -- and all he had to do was look.

-- Page 17 --

The Ilanics on the cruiser are wearing masks -- "We regret that our comm system has a malfunction" -- and they ask to dock. Aeryn, in command, as she takes navigation control: "Don't even bother responding, Zhaan." Even Pilot gets in on the action, ceding her control without a word. Even Rygel helped, sort of! Okay, maybe they won't all die horribly. Except for how they totally do in every episode.

D'Argo and Crichton run into the docking bay and D'Argo tells Verell to get away from Matala. "What are you going to do, D'Argo? Shoot me?" Verell's just like, "I need my prunes! Who are you people? Are you my grandson?" D'Argo says she'll be getting shot but good when those guys in the fake cruiser turn out to be Scorvians, which they totally are. Matala keeps talking crazy -- "No, D'Argo, you'll see. The *coming* ship, it's Ilanic. D'Argo, *trust* your *hearrrrrrrt*. Your *heart* knows the *truuuuuuth*. You can *trust* me." She then totally grabs Verell as a hostage with a big knife and hisses in her Scorvian voice at them, ordering D to kick the Qualta toward her. D'Argo slides it past her, between some crates. Verell's like, "Are we going to the circus? Where are my pants?" and D'Argo gives his word as a Luxan that she's a Scorvian. Verell gets shanked for like the eighth time and Matala somehow manages to get to the shuttle, D'Argo and John hanging off her like attack dogs. D'Argo takes a billion years to finally extricate the Qualta, and John warns him about how they will all instantly catch black hole death if he shoots the shuttle. "You have to trust me!" Verell slumps and fidgets around on the work bench -- "Back in my day we called it a Model T, and it had a running board, by gum" -- and for some reason decides to set the black hole in the shuttle free. John orders Pilot to starburst, and they get the hell out of there as the shuttle totally crumples and fireballs into the Scorvian cruiser and becomes nothing. Science for war is nothing, it's a black hole with no end at all. Coming out of starburst,



Pilot gives the all clear, D'Argo wows, and John apologizes for not seeing the green science blaze future that time.

Galley, where a sated Rygel is facedown on the table. John brushes him off lovingly and calls him "li'l camper" and tells him he looks good. I like it a *lot* when John is aggressively sweet with Rygel. I have no idea why. There's something having to do with a horrible smell that I don't really wanna know about, and Rygel apologizes, calling it the "back end of a food binge," and admits that it's "very difficult to stop when you get going." Which is, again, the point of Rygel. He asks vainly -- or perhaps just confusedly -- which bit of him it is that looks good, exactly. "The bit that's not jumping back and forth in time." Rygel starts gagging and John teases him adorably with a food cube, and he runs out just as D'Argo's entering. D'Argo heads for the fridge and doesn't really want to deal with John.

-- Page 18 --

"Hey, how ya doin'?" D'Argo says he'll "recover," so gruffly that John laughs. "Yeah? When?" Don't poke the Luxan, dude. "Do you mock me?" D'Argo fronts, and John just sighs. "D'Argo, I mock all of us." John allows as how D'Argo's not the first person in all time that got "his head snapped off by a chick," and D'Argo grumps that he doesn't want to talk about it. "Fine. But I'm right." D'Argo, knowing what's next on John's agenda, because as usual it's all over his face, barks that his personal life is not for discussion. So John nods, like he agrees with that, and then asks if D's true crime would be considered part of his personal life. Um? D'Argo again says that they won't be talking about it, and turns to leave, then turns back. Because that moment, that deft handling of the X element, where the existence of the thing is more important than the actual thing, that moment when John looked him directly in the eyes and told him -- by bringing it up at all -- that it was okay, was the moment D'Argo could love him. "Crichton. I am normally unaffected by females during a crisis." John nods, and he continues. "It's just...it has been so long." It's not planets, it's people. "Now that, I understand," John says, and stares far away. "Man, do I understand it." And then, we can only assume, he heads off to start a fight with Aeryn.

<http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/show/farscape/throne-for-a-loss/>

## - Right Now I'm A Race Car -

-- Page 1 --

I don't know how this happened but *Moya's* got visitors, whom John and Aeryn -- mistakes two and three -- are on their way to welcome in the docking bay. Aeryn's complaining about how little they know about the Tavleks, their guests, but John mentions that they're going to pay for a cargo haul, and calls them "Tavloids," and Aeryn corrects him. "Tav-*leks*." It's one of those jokes that goes back around to being funny again, not just because it also doubles as "You are a fucking retard" every time she says it. Of course Aeryn's still in Running Man mode, so cross that with her suspicion of strangers and other races, and no wonder she's twitching so bad. He tells her the deal won't go through if she greets them doing her John Wayne impression, and there's a humorous interchange of the sort I don't care for, where Aeryn thinks John Wayne's a relative, and instead of explaining himself, John makes a list of

movies that John Wayne was in, like that's going to help, and it's all very Attack of the Tarantino Virus (which: check out the airdate), and finally Aeryn just nods like she gets it, and interrupts. "Look, no. The point is, I'm not going to meet that shuttle unarmed. Simple as that." John screams about how "Kung Fu never carried a gun," and I get that it's funny, but it's not funny to me, because she doesn't know who Kung Fu is either, and I think Browder really enjoys this stuff so I can't be too mad about it, but: it's hard enough to communicate with Aeryn anyway, due to her total craziness, so why you gotta aim the pop-cultural salad shooter at her all the time when you know it's the one thing she's not going to understand? She's like Fuckin' Old Man Stephen King with that shit. Stick with what she knows, leave out the relevant-yet-not entertaining analogies, because you just lost the entire conversation for no reason. And the last thing you need to do is hand her yet another conversation, because she's got PK-inflated sense of self as it is.

D'Argo and Zhaan set the stage for Rygel's His Eminence act -- speaking of self-inflation rate approaching infinity -- as Rygel practices his speech. "We, Rygel the Sixteenth, Dominar of the Hynerian Empire, and beloved sovereign of over six hundred billion subjects! Welcome to our yacht!" (Heh: "*What the yachts?*" *Hello? Is this thing on?*") D'Argo worries about the whole pretense at having the Dominar on board, and Zhaan tells Rygel to cram it as he keeps begging that they build his parapet higher. "I need them to look up to me!" And D'Argo snorts. "Why? We don't." Word. I don't even look at the little bitch head-on. Rygel brings up other negotiations he's carried out, and D'Argo says on the last one, all he got was "stale food cubes," which Rygel in turn notes that D'Argo chowed down on. Aeryn and John come in, fighting about how John could even dare to tell her what to do. "Who are you to offer suggestions?" she says, and he starts to bitch at her, but Zhaan cuts in so everybody can remember that she's better than anybody ever: "Am I the only species in creation that doesn't thrive on conflict?" Shut up, dude. The fifteen different kinds of irony gleaming off every angle of that statement are blinding and my eyeballs just got fried by your hypocrisy, you asshole. You're the only member of your species fucked up enough to do the opposite, you mutant! Way to go! I hope you don't pay [a horrible price!](#) (I love you!) D'Argo tells everybody to shut up, and Rygel agrees and then continues to give some speech about something. D'Argo clarifies that "shut up" includes Sparky, and points out that the Tavlek cargo could be anything: contraband, vermin-infested, even toxic. Rygel gives that the thumbs-up, because they could charge more, and his scepter gets tumescent. John pushes it down again. Zhaan says all migraine-y that they've "had this discussion" already, and *they out-voted him*, note. He doesn't get a say -- the Luxan got outvoted *by a Sebacean*, and the rest of them -- but he keeps talking about it anyway. The neurosis of the oppressed.

-- Page 2 --

Rygel: "Oh, argue later. They've docked. Positions, please! Come on, now! If you must address me, do so as Your Supreme Eminence" -- D'Argo stares at his weird wee ass -- "which you should be doing anyway." John smiles and they wait patiently for the cargo doors to open. Rygel is standing center, regal, with D'Argo and Aeryn on his *right*, and John and Zhaan on his *left*. Soldiers v. Scientists; Body v. Mind. The MacGuffin is *purely* the science of violence. The A Story -- Bekhesh -- is all about D'Argo and Aeryn, and their approaches to violence, but it's interesting to note they've

already self-selected out this way: the two that don't want to deal with the Tavloids, and the two that don't mind. The B Stories -- Kyr and nameless ladies -- are about how John and Zhaan throw themselves physically between these people and their violence, because they don't know what else to do, because they both have a vested interest in avoiding violence: one because he's not strong enough for it, the other because she's...well. Not strong enough for it, actually. Interesting. This is, possibly, Zhaan's best episode in the first season (and, leaving out the Season Two trilogies, her best in the series -- not to mention no Stark cocking it up with his hot crazy ass). It's lovely, because the Tavloids line up just as perfectly, in terms of the story. Bekhesh is on our right -- facing off against D'Argo and Aeryn -- while Kyr is on the left, with John and Zhaan. It's a chess game (wait for S3), with the pawns in the middle (Rygel and the nameless third Tavloid that grabs him). Everybody's facing their partners in the dance -- even though John ultimately takes out Bekhesh, it's because he's the opposite of Bekhesh, and because he rightfully belongs on the left, with Zhaan. (Not to mention that Kyr's relationship with Zhaan is an echo of his own -- and Zhaan's with John, to be frank, later on.) Bekhesh's head is a metal mask from the nose up, with little BB gunshots for seeing out of. He's the leader of their group of warriors, and totally intense. Kyr -- who is young and pretty fabulous, and who will be dealing with Zhaan this episode -- is wearing a ridiculous helmet. They're wearing their aggression on their sleeves, metaphorically and literally, all jumpy roid rage and shiny gauntlet weapons clearly armed and ready. Their bodies are maps of scars and scabs and war pride; adding them to the series in this episode is like adding real violence to the mixture. So far, it's only the PKs that engender violence, and they're the antagonists, so it makes sense, but now that a "lower" race is involved, a race that seems to be actually *made*, forged, of violence and rage...things get scarier than they have been, now that we have to look them in the eye. (And, of course, once we taste their anger for ourselves.) Dropped into the beaker, so to speak: *Oh, this show is like that. Huh.* "No movement!" they shout, and "Remain where you are!" The music does this cool thing like at the beginning of "[Downloaded](#)," where there's a beat of silence for yelling, before it comes back in -- really amps up the tension. The Tavloids charge their weapons, and Bekhesh dares Aeryn to move. Zhaan steps forward to apologize, sure that they've "misunderstood" something along the way...which is dumb, but I like it. Especially after watching her fall under the suspiciousness spell [last week with the Drak](#), it's cool to see her back to assuming the best of people at all times. It's pretty transcendent, as well, especially since we get to watch her work it out for herself, and see where she stands. Which again: best place possible, and one she frankly should have kept her beautiful eye on.

-- Page 3 --

The Tavloids fire on Zhaan and John cries out, jumping to push her out of the way. Meanwhile, one of them snags Rygel and puts him in a bag. Cool. Shortest episode ever, with the happiest ending. Later, dudes! But no, because Rygel's gotta bitch, and Aeryn's gotta shoot at Bekhesh, so we can see how they catch the little yellow bolts of war with their gauntlet weapons, which is admittedly kind of cool to see. D'Argo rushes the one that's got Rygel, who floats away, still wearing his kidnapping bag, "demanding" that somebody help him. Everybody's occupied with getting shot at, and Aeryn and D'Argo are of course totally on point, taking care of stuff, and Rygel's in the

middle, floating around and getting knocked this way and that in his little Jazzy ("Someone put a stop to this!") before finally just knocking himself out by running directly into a wall. Kyr knocks D'Argo down and draws on him, all about to kill D, and John calls him "Butkis" and clonks him on the head. When he drops, the gauntlet releases and comes off. The Tavloids grab the bag of Rygel as everybody continues to shoot at everybody else. John calls to Pilot to shut the door, and Rygel -- this is interesting -- calls out to *Aeryn* for help. I like that. Meanwhile, D'Argo puts on Kyr's gauntlet, like an idiot, but can't get it to work in time to bring down Bekhesh and the other one, who exeunt with a quickness. This is the sound of D'Argo using technology: "Arrg! Arrg! [*shake shake*] How does it work?! Arrg! Arrrrrg! Junk! [*smack*] Juuunk!" As D'Argo heaves and acts all crazy and adrenal -- like, more than usual -- John tells Zhaan their "Supreme Eminence" has been "bagged." I don't understand the problem. Credits.

As John and Pilot argue John's obnoxious self-referring space terminology ("Tractor beam"? What's that? ...You mean the docking web?), Zhaan takes off Kyr's helmet. John tells Pilot to chase the Tavloids, and D'Argo tells Pilot to ignore John and get the hell out of there. "Rygel brought this on himself. I say we leave him there," growls D'Argo, and Zhaan tells him to let John finish, but he goes nuts some more, smacking a giant cargo bin so it goes flying, and informs everyone that they need to shut up and that they are leaving now. He and John both are somewhat surprised at D'Argo's new Hulk Smash powers, but not so intrigued that D'Argo can stop to think or do anything except yell and run around -- and you'd think that this episode was about learning about D'Argo and violence, but it's smarter than that. Aeryn stops him: "That is a very versatile and powerful weapon. We can work out how to use it." Aeryn and Zhaan check it out, and notice that it is -- disgustingly -- pumping shit into his arm, this golden liquid that I believe shrinks your nads. D'Argo's like, "What? It stuck some needles in my arm, so?" And John is like, "You must take that off immediately! Too scary!" D'Argo hisses and shakes off Zhaan's touch: "Let go of me! This ship needs a leader and none of you have what it takes! From now on I am in charge!" Whatever. He stomps off, and John, Aeryn, and Zhaan nod at each other, and attack. Love that! D'Argo knocks all three of their asses across the room in like one split second. Love that more! "Never! Lay your hands on me! Again!" John and Aeryn stare at each other, and Zhaan sends them after D'Argo, and cradles the young Tavloid on the floor.

-- Page 4 --

John follows D'Argo down the corridor, begging to him to slow down, listen, whatever, and D'Argo finally just shoots at him. He only misses because of John and Aeryn's ability to shove each other into small areas with their entire bodies. Which happens in every episode, but I can't think of an episode where it happens more than this one. It's literally like every scene, and sometimes they don't even bother to explain why. Somebody's gotta have somebody else up against a wall at all times in this episode, as long as their names are John or Aeryn. Every time you get the Body Shove, drink. And drunkenly make out with your hand, all, "Oooh, I love you so much...*but I cannot!*" She stands against John, like she's protecting him, and they stare at D'Argo, where John notes that D's not "good at listening." Aeryn, of course, is like, "Listen to this, bitch," and fires at him -- he catches the bolt -- and John's like, "Would *you* listen?" D'Argo fires back; John gives Aeryn the Body Shove right back in a way that makes

no sense in terms of physics, but is awesome nonetheless. Drink. I was going to say they should just have a show where they do this back and forth for forty-five minutes against a variety of surfaces and in different directions, because it's exciting every time, like maybe in different outfits or something, but then I realized they already have that show and that it is called *Farscape*. And you LOVE it!

Zhaan gives Kyr smelling salts, and he sits up all in a mess, blinking and shaking. "Take it easy, child," she whispers, and he takes offense, because he doesn't know that's just her way of saying, "Hello, I'm better than you but hello nonetheless." She promises the still-disoriented Kyr that he won't be injured, and Aeryn enters, begging to differ. She grabs him and body-shoves him into the wall, but not in the sexy way. "That weapon of yours, how do we get it off?" Kyr laughs that one of them was dumb enough to put it on, and without his helmet he does look very young, and covered in scars and lumps and grossness. "You're too weak to handle it," he says, explaining that it's pumping "stimulant" into D'Argo. John says that their friend just tried to kill them, and Kyr is wicked pleased by that. Aeryn asks how they get it off, again, and Kyr says they can't, but John's like, "Duh, it came off when I knocked you out." Aeryn says the hated "makes sense" sci-fi bullshit phrase about that: "If you're left unconscious in battle, you don't want the enemy cutting your arm off to get your weapon." Gross. Outside the story because [you know I hate that shit](#), but also inside the story! Gross! Peacekeepers are so gross! The Uncharted Territories are so gross! I realize that I am somewhat sheltered, given what I do all day, but I'm guessing that even if I went back downtown, I wouldn't have to worry about that shit. "It can be disarmed without having to be *disarmed*." Boo! Hiss! Shut up! John tries to think of ways they can knock D'Argo out, and since they're short on more retarded puns, Zhaan offers to formulate a "sleep mist."

-- Page 5 --

D'Argo is now kicking DRD's in command, pissing Pilot off no end. "It felt good! Give me navigation! Now!" I think that I like roid D'Argo more than regular D'Argo. By like a thousand. Him I love anyway, but do some drugs and we'll talk. "Do as I say or I'll rip off all your arms!" he says, which is funny, for now, but will be fucking horrible in a few episodes, because welcome to this show: no funny we can't stab through your soul like a knife made of ice and awfulness. "Enough of this stupid voting! From now on, I'll make the decisions!" See, and I like that, because you can't...I have a real problem with people who apologize by saying "I was just drunk," you know? Blaming your behavior on chemicals over choice is the short road to addiction, not to mention being an asshole. So I like how the way D'Argo acts out while hopped up on the 'loids connects both to something small -- the voting on *Moya*, which is always going to for whatever's stupidest and most dangerous -- and something large -- his oppression and that of his people, which is a story we only ever see pieces of, except through D'Argo and his family.

Zhaan concocts the sleep mist as Aeryn handcuffs Kyr and acts very Bad Cop with him. Pilot complains on clamshell about D'Argo's threats, which seem really unbelievable for the moment. John tells him to stall, that there's a systems malfunction or something, but Pilot's like, "Tried it." He's interrupted by a transmission from the planet; Aeryn shoves Kyr at the clamshell to speak with Bekhesh. "We've got your king. You can buy him back," growls Bekhesh. This is why you never let Rygel talk.

And why you never use him and his royalty as a pawn. But do they learn? They do not. The only person who walks out of this episode with any kind of insight into how worthless being a deposed Dominar actually is, is Rygel, and he can't even admit that anyway. Aeryn points out that they have Kyr, and implies she is going to kill him posthaste because they are stupid aliens with a stupid planet and she doesn't even like Rygel anyway and she loves fucking shit up, but John offers an even swap. Bekhesh isn't feeling it: "He's part of the price, but he's not worth a king." He demands some kind of made-up chemical compound that of course *Moya* doesn't have, in addition, and Aeryn nods sarcastically throughout the rest of the scene, hilariously. "Yeah, fucking right. We'll get right on that. Psych! I am going to shoot all of your asses in a second!" John's like, "For real?" and Bekhesh has clearly drunk the Rygel Kool-Aid: "Divided among six hundred billion affluent subjects, it's not so much." Aeryn flat-out tells him that's not happening, with a billion deluxe fingers in the air, and I'm about to kiss her right on the mouth when Pilot interrupts: "D'Argo's getting angrier. Do something!" John tells the Tavloids that it's not a good time, and they'll call him back. Can you imagine trying to get John Crichton to break up with you? It's less work to just stay with him. Bekhesh serves him a plateload of Faye Dunaway about how they'll call *you*, in a day, and then they will kill Rygel, and then totally hangs up on them. Steroids do nothing for your phone etiquette, man. And without that, you're just a jerk.

-- Page 6 --

Zhaan finishes up the sleep mist, in the form of a water balloon, which of course makes John very happy, because he's a kid. Aeryn immediately holds out her hand, because she has grave doubts -- albeit based in reality -- about his ability to aim anything or do anything worthwhile, ever, and John tells her to shove it, giving Zhaan a beaming thumbs-up. Aeryn shoves Kyr at Zhaan and tells her to lock him up; Zhaan pretends that this is a tragedy and she's only doing it because Aeryn told her to, still good-copping her way through the situation. Notice how well that goes, without even having to discuss it? John and D'Argo have the same easy operational relationship: as long as they don't talk, they work perfectly. They're each the more the other could be, and you can't talk that one out, because their utterly opposed worldviews corrode the signal.

D'Argo's still beating hell out of the controls on command, screaming at Pilot, and Pilot's still getting prissy about it. Aeryn and John walk up quietly behind D'Argo, and John tosses the water balloon just as D'Argo's screaming about how they're all conspiring to undermine his command. He goes down, and John gets all Shakespearean about it ("Goodnight, sweet prince"), but a bit too soon: the pump gets going and injects D'Argo with a second wind. He jumps up and looks scary at them, and they scatter. John drags Aeryn into a side room off the corridor, and Aeryn bitches about how his "suggestions" continue to do great things for their survival, and John comms to Pilot for "all the acceleration *Moya's* got." Pilot says, "No." Awesomely. He waits a beat -- and a very funny John face -- before continuing: "I can't activate propulsion. *Moya* has a systems malfunction." That's awesome. John says, aloud: "For *real*?" For real. Aeryn figures out some kind of *Moya*-talk about how there's "excess super-coolant" venting or something, whatever, and complains about how they're wasting time. I wish I knew what John's original plan was, though, because the new one is weird. He tells Pilot to close all the vents, and Pilot worries that this would



cause some kind of pressure buildup. I am not following this at all, which is embarrassing, because John's giving all indication of knowing what's going on. "Naw, it won't. I've gotta plan," he tells Aeryn. The scariest words he ever orders. And then *Moya* does it.

Zhaan brings Kyr to a cell, where he yells at her: "I'm not afraid of you! You're soft and weak!" Pilot comms to Zhaan, and when she acknowledges, Kyr tries to rush her. Of course, because she's bad-ass, she totally sidesteps and then tosses him against a wall, and he slides down it really slowly. "Soft, yes. Weak, no." FUCK YEAH, girl! Who's your momma? Zhaan's your momma now! She turns politely to the air again: "What was that, Pilot?" He tells her to hold on for a sudden acceleration, because "...Crichton has an idea." She sighs and rolls her eyes and curses in Delvian, and then locks Kyr in the cell and takes off.

-- Page 7 --

John and Aeryn hide from the rampaging D'Argo -- in the room where the pressure buildup will vent -- as D's screaming that they are cowards. This, of course, causes Aeryn to bolt for him, because she is still an eight-year-old boy, and John grabs her. They wait a second, and then Aeryn dashes out, launches a teasing shot, and runs back to the room. "Peacekeeper coward!" *Somehow*, Aeryn is now on the floor, with John on top of her the entire length of his body. Drink. D'Argo walks in with some scary growling, and John gives Pilot his mark. Nothing happens. D'Argo screams about "challenge my command" and "do it to my face" and "show me what a savage you are" and all this, and the whole time John is yelling at Pilot to do whatever the thing is, and finally the excess super-coolants jet out, knocking D'Argo down and sending him woozy. John falls on his back, Aeryn now on top of him. Lordy. Drink! Other than an excuse to show them in as many intimate positions as possible, I don't know what the "plan" actually was, except to note that Plan A was about sleep, the science of sleep, and Plan B was about thugging it up. Which, in this episode, was always going to work better, because this episode is Very Special and all about how 'roids are bad, but also awesome. "That was your plan?" Aeryn asks, and John congratulates himself. "That is the last time I go along with one of your plans!" she snorts, and he promises that she gets to make the plan next time. John agrees. I *fervently* agree, because she's nuts but she gets shit done. John takes the gauntlet off D'Argo and they leave.

On Tavloidia, there's crazy electric grinder guitar that plays over an elegant shot that follows one Tavloid through a military camp, people talking and stuff, and then into a barracks-y jail, past the row of cells, and Rygel speaks as we get nearer to him, his voice echoing in the jail. He is half-buried in mud, in the middle of his cell, which I bet happens to Muppets more than other people. At least it's part of the story. He has said before that he hates getting stuck in mud, and I think there's a strength to the motif of getting his lower body stuck in stuff all the time beyond the obvious puppetry cheats, because he's a paradox of movement. He's the saddest one because he's the only one that never accepts his actual life: it's always deferred, unto the end of the show and beyond, to when he gets back his kingdom. Everybody else confronts these dreams -- over and over and over, heartbreakingly -- and comes to different kinds of terms with it, but Rygel is the only one who sits in pride of place no matter where he goes, because his imagination makes him a king. He's like Zhaan that way: they spent

hundreds of years in jail, and they both built these amazing castles in the clouds of how powerful and strong and special they were, how God had chosen just them above all others, and it is both their strength and their tragedy. What makes you awesome is always, always the same thing that makes you suck. What keeps you alive in extremity can also warp you so far past normal that you'll never really be able to live regular life. It's great to say that John would turn down Earth because of the wonders that he's seen, but it's also true that he'll never be fit for Earth again, because of all the horrors the show visits upon him.

-- Page 8 --

"I demand to speak to the [fucker] in charge! I will not be treated like this! How dare you bury me in mud! Are you listening? You're nothing but barbarians! Don't you know this is an act of war? When my council hears of this, the Hynerian Navy will scorch this hell-hole!" Buried in mud, yeah? His next-door neighbor growls, frighteningly. That's Jotheb, a four-throated insectile beast that takes up almost his whole cell, and I think it's probably best that (puppetry cheat again) we never get a good look at him beyond his sinister glowing red eyes and his very scary voice. Rygel congratulates himself on his rhetoric, and Jotheb murmurs that his "sleep cycle has been disturbed." Rygel assures Jotheb that he doesn't give a fuck, and then they introduce themselves to each other politely. Jotheb (next in succession over the Consortium of Trow) has never heard of the Hynerian Empire, and vice versa. So they're both kings of nothing, in jail. "The imperfection is yours," says Jotheb, on learning that Rygel's never heard of it, and brags that it's "ten thousand" in size. Rygel goes, "Shyeah! I have six hundred billion subjects!" and Jotheb clarifies that he meant ten thousand *planets*, or roughly four billion Trow. These are the two most boring people in the universe. This is like what if you had to sit with [Trump and Vijay Singh](#), and on top of that pay attention. Rygel doesn't believe him, and Jotheb assures him again that the imperfection is his. They might actually be comparing dick size at this point, but they're aliens so we can't tell; either way I'm positive the imperfection is Rygel's, because that's how you end up like that.

Segue! "This malfunction is Rygel's fault?" Pilot says that Rygel borrowed "a vital component" of *Moya's* circuitry, "just for a while." Aeryn's like, "And you were...high?" but Pilot insists that he "flatly forbade it." Aeryn goes almost entirely nuts as Pilot explains that *Moya's* synaptic processors really are pretty, and John figures out that it's the thing on the end of Rygel's scepter that was all up in his face before. Aeryn offers to kill him, and John asks how long *Moya* can maintain orbit with part of her brain missing -- it's actually already deteriorating. I guess that explains the fake systems malfunction that wasn't so fake. "I'll torture him, then I'll kill him," Aeryn revises. She comms to Zhaan to check on D'Argo, but he's still out.

-- Page 9 --

"I can't wait for him," gruffs Aeryn, and tells Pilot to get her Prowler ready. Pilot doesn't even ask. Aeryn tells John to head out with her: "We don't get that crystal back, we're gonna crash into the planet. I've gotta plan." I love how even the show can't justify saving Rygel, because he's such a piece of shit, so it's like "...but without him they'll all die this week, so we *have* to go get him." John starts stuttering because he knows a little something about Aeryn and her plans: "Jam down to the planet. Conduct a commando-style raid against what, a couple of dozen heavily armed Tavloids, and

then haul ass back up to the ship." She corrects him ("Tav-/eks") and takes off. He starts screaming that Wile E. Coyote could come up with a better plan, and -- not for nothing, but that's (a) the only plan she ever comes up with, and (b) the only plan that ever works -- asks how the hell she's going to pull this off herself. "No, of course not! You're coming with me," she says easily. He tells her to shove that egg back on up the chicken, but she storms back: "This is my turn. My plan. Now let's go." He tries desperately to come up with alternate plans, scrapes the barrel a bit -- "Try negotiating with the Tavloids?" -- and she full-on just walks up and punches him. "Tav-/eks." It's one of those things, like I said, that comes back around to be funny again, which are few and depend on mostly acting chops. Two things here: one being that, again, in this episode you catch more flies with hitting than with talking, because we're in D'Argo/Aeryn world; and the other being that it's still about running, for Aeryn. Even now, she needs *Moya* moving, and that's the only reason she wants Rygel back, or D'Argo awake, or John around: so she can keep running.

Commercial. Aeryn's Prowler heads for Tavloidia, John passed out in the back. Aeryn is wearing crazy sexy netting stuff, for under the Tavlek armor, and looks like the hottest thing in all the Matrix. Zhaan tells her that *Moya* can't seem to scan for the shuttle the bad guys took back to the planet, because there are too many "chlorophoric compounds in the vegetation." I think that "chlorophoric compounds" means "shitty spray-paint," which is something that the flora on Tavlekistan are just covered in. Pilot's saying they can get a better fix once they reconfigure *Moya*'s sensors, but Aeryn's all about the moving forward: "I'm following the same trajectory their shuttle did." John jolts awake, still yakking about negotiations, and then notices he's in the Prowler. She raises one adorable, innocent eyebrow. "You hit me!" he whines, and she just grins to herself. "No, no, a Pentak jab! You're more susceptible than most." He tells her to make sure he doesn't wake up next time, the most adorable nonsense threat ever, and she just chuckles to herself and shakes her head. "Oh, don't 'tsk' me! This is not over with! And when it is, you and I are gonna sit down and have a serious talk!" She tells him that sounds great, but probably they're both going to die in a few minutes, and banks hard to the right, like a total bad-ass.

-- Page 10 --

Kyr sits in his cell, wrapped in a blanket. Zhaan brings him Crichton's orange flight suit from the *Farscape One*, and that bugs me, because I bet Kyr doesn't smell that awesome, and I wouldn't want him wearing my clothes until after a good hot shower. She hands it to him and we get a good look. He looks a lot like a Scarran, actually, but we don't know what those are yet. I bet they're related. I love how on this show, there's a limited number of base races, and they all have a million different types and offshoots. It lends the show a lot of texture, even though the relationships between all of them are really confusing (like, I'm still not convinced I know what's going on with the Kalish, which is like the ultimate plot thread of the end of the show), which is also more realistic. I guess all the big sci-fi have things like that, like *Star Wars* has whole books about how the races dress and how they feel about each other, but since none of those characters have personalities or souls it's harder to care. Here, they will strip and show you their junk so you know! Zhaan offers him some food, and he offers for her to go fuck herself. "Are you in discomfort?" she asks calmly, and he gets really frustrated with Crichton's clothes, because they're too hard with all the straps and

snaps. (I'm not making a joke about that, because I am sure you and I both could work it out with a quickness, if necessary. Aeryn, it takes a while to get those straps sorted.) Kyr demands his clothes back, and Zhaan says they "had to borrow them," for Aeryn's ridiculous plan. At a loss and feeling vulnerable, Kyr gets very aggressive and pathetic: "Had to? Or did you just wanna strip me? What's the matter? Too prim to sneak a peek? You afraid you might like what you saw? You ever looked at a male before, huh? Huh? Well, here you go!" She's not entirely impressed (I told you about the steroids!) but tells him sweetly that he's "quite respectable for [his] age." Crazy Zhaan music starts, as though to say, "I am *Farscape*: even with everybody going crazy, we still have time to crack jokes about your dick." He's thrown off. "Did you think you'd shock me?" she asks. "Is nudity a taboo in your culture? Are you ashamed of your bodies?" Her condescension is a weapon more powerful than wormholes. Kyr's like, "We would be, if we looked like you, Beavis!" And she tells him that it's doubtful. She stands before him, drops her gown, and looks him full-on, standing perfectly still. From here, she's got nothing to be worried about. You get more blue ass on this show, I swear. Kyr stutters and stares and is weirded out. She puts her robes back on, wonderfully and with a stately grace, and asks again if he's hungry, and leaves. His mind is kind of blown: she's beaten him twice, now. And he's not got a lot of options left to challenge her with. He's a kid; I love him.

-- Page 11 --

John stands in a silly blue-sprayed jungle clearing. He's so very good at standing. Top marks in standing for John Crichton. Aeryn says she spotted a camp over the next ridge as they were landing, and he starts bitching about how he just wants to stay put. She starts listing reasons that he should go with her: "Land mines, fire snakes, razor grass..." He grabs his stuff, all pissy. "Night-vision snipers, Morlean death spiders..." She smiles as he follows. Her humor is more inclusive as she begins to understand the texture of her shipmates. Their personalities, how they work. Eventually, she'll actually let them in on the joke, and stop being so deadpan and just admit that she's fucking with them most of the time. Hopefully. In any case, she becomes more and more charming as she incorporates this, because it makes her bigger and it makes her more, and she actually has the best sense of humor on *Moya*, but it's a muscle she's never flexed before.

Rygel struggles in his Tavloid mud as Jotheb growls at him. "That dreadful noise is what?" (It is my dream to be Jotheb all the time: "This mayonnaise is what? The imperfection is yours!") Rygel admits that his stomach is grumbling, and Jotheb asks if he isn't hungry. Two prisoners, and we're taking a short break right now for this: one of whom is in pain without his steroids, and the other who's playing a game about his steroids. Both of which prove what a man -- and what a spam-email hugeness your parts are packing; and yes, there's a difference, boys -- you really are. Who are you without your 'loids/political clout? They're both lies. They're both beside the point. And yet, because this episode is about dick, we've got two liars swinging it. Is Kyr hungry? Fuck yeah, for something he doesn't know the name of, and can't fathom. Is Rygel hungry? Listen: "They fed you first? Ugh. I don't want any food, anyway. I want out. There must be a way. There's always a way." Rygel 1, Kyr 0. Jotheb's like, try to get out, get the Tavloids angry, not good. Rygel calls him out and starts pulling with a good 24 pounds behind it on the bars of his cage, promising that when the fictitious

army arrives, it'll be Everybody v. Bekhesh so don't puss out. Then a guard brings food. Which Rygel responds to positively, and then mid-sentence gets *really* deep and *really* creeped out, because the bowl he's been served is a skull. Girl, you've seen me in some positions but let me tell you that you can fill in the fucking blanks on that bullshit. No way, sir. Jotheb tells him to chill ("That can be no one you knew") in a very capitalism-is-its-own-sentence way, and Rygel tells the skull-bowl to fuck off. Jotheb reaches for it and Rygel tells him, grossed the fuck out or not, he can't have any. Heh. Fucking Rygel.

-- Page 12 --

Zhaan helps the now-ungauntletted D'Argo to command, where Pilot bitchily but sweetly asks if he's okay. Have I told you about my theory that Pilot is not only gay but hugely gay? I have my reasons. (Dude, the "DNA Mad Scientist" recap is going to be 500 pages long. Fucking Maldis of all things? That's so messed up.) Zhaan smiles cutely about how D'Argo insists on helping, and then -- still feeling the 'loids -- he bitches about how they're going to fuck it up if he doesn't. Pilot suggests Pilot-ly that he get some rest, and D'Argo protests that he wants to help. Pilot gives good Carolyn Kepcher about "Your assistance... would be welcomed," clearly not meaning it, and D'Argo grimaces. Which is hard to do with fifteen pounds of prosthetic penis-tentacles flapping all over the place.

John swats a "jungle" "bug" in the "jungle" and Aeryn gives him shit, and John obligingly bitches, and she's about to tell him the only reason she brought him along is to make him look weak so she can continue to think he's a little bitch, but there's gunfire. They hit the "jungle" floor, and she takes the "oculars" from him, handing him a gun. NO! Dumb! She looks through the scope and spots three Tavloids milling around a fresh kill, and it's a thing about the non-violent science of the ocular v. the violent science of the gauntlet. One is science -- find it out! -- and the other is not -- beat it up! See which wins this week. Immediately Aeryn's like, "Clearly I need to beat the shit out of them to find out where Rygel is, until they are dead." John asks how the 3:1 ratio of Aeryns:Tavloids is supposed to work, and he's answered by the click of stupid-ass Officer Sun clapping the gauntlet on. Aeryn assures his hysterical (and clearly correct) response that he can just knock her out with Zhaan's sleepy juice after she's...I don't know. Ruined everything with roid rage, I guess. If she can't shoot it, she'll do some drugs and then shoot at it some more. She's so awesome. "Where's my rifle?" John promises her he'll trunk her the second she gets back; the entire viewership laughs like hell. Even four episodes in, you already know his ass is getting knocked the fuck out before any of this happens.

Aeryn, wearing Kyr's Tavloid outfit, comes up to the kill-crazy hunting party and asks where she might find Bekhesh, and one of them (a female named Hontovek) tells her getting stupid and lost in the four feet of spray-painted "jungle" is her problem, and the Aeryn 'loids them all to the ground. She grabs Hontovek and asks again, as John whimpers and watches another Tavloid round the clearing. Hontovek starts to give Alpha Aeryn directions, and meanwhile John...blows up the rifle. For no reason other than that he's not good in fighter stories. "Eeeeeee-EEEEEEEEEEE" goes the gun, and then it goes blooey, distracting all the people who actually belong here. The Tavloids all think they're under attack -- it's a nice touch that Aeryn points her gauntlet toward the forest, already under the influence -- and Aeryn runs back to John.

-- Page 13 --

Command. D'Argo, despite the fact that it's *John* and *Aeryn* down there, is *confused* by the explosions planetside, asking if the sensors are still working. Pilot's like, "God! Yes! Explosions! Duh!" And D'Argo shakes his head, because of course they are. He requests a transport. That should really make things better and not worse, right?

John heads uphill, Aeryn behind, demanding to know what happened with the rifle. "[It's] all over the place!" He's like, "Am I bleeding?" She asks him to confirm that he managed to blow it up, then realizes he "overloaded the pulse chamber." He politely asks her to drop it, and move on with him, and she's like, "It's all right. I'll take them all on!" Sleepy Juice Time is all the time with your ass! He shoves her up the path, still with the complaining and crazy Conan talk.

Bekhesh approaches Rygel and Jotheb, telling the latter his ransom will be there in two days and then he can go. Jotheb has big red eyes and a hunched back and he's green, but he doesn't have a *face* face. He's crappy-looking enough that you're kind of glad. Rygel whines and Jotheb tells him to hush, but too late: Bekhesh is like, "What about you?" Shit. Don't ask how Rygel's doin'. Rygel bitches that he's not being treated awesome and that his plateware is skulls and that he would like to see the manager, and Bekhesh takes the skull-bowl out of his cell, with apologies. Hell. Rygel and Jotheb compare dicks again about "oh, your subjects didn't come up with ransom?" and then Bekhesh comes back with "an extra helping" of...something, which he splashes all over the place, and tells him to shut up or else it'll be Rygel's skull "that serves as someone's bowl." Dude, I'd order those off 3 AM paid programming if you could assure me it was Rygel's actual fucking skull. A bargain at any price. "This soup is delicious! Shut up, Rygel! Yum!" I don't even like soup; I could work around it.

Story B. Kyr screams in his cell, nonsense really, crawling around all crazy; Zhaan comes in with a tiny glass and sets it on a coffee table. Kyr yells at her like a junkie and grabs her, digging in with a nail -- she watches, interested, as white fluid drains out of her punctured wrist. (SPOILER! Zhaan isn't a mammal! She's like this anyway!) After a sec she shoves him away and drops the white fluid into the glass, offering once more to help the kid. He protests and she tells him he's nicked either way, and then *rubs some of the white blood on her lips*. Tasty. "This should relieve the symptoms of withdrawal," she says, kissing him good and hard. She places her hands on his chest. "And this will remove the pain," she continues. She does the Shut Up Storm thing, but her eyes don't go white, just stare up. Kyr stops shaking and looks confused, because wouldn't you? All that pretentious talk and flashing her cooch, and then her solution is to first smear her gross white blood on her face, and then kiss you, and then do some kind of Vulcan mind-meld on you? I'd have *questions*. Number one being: "Exactly where do you get off?"

-- Page 14 --

Meanwhile, Rygel is looking at what remains of the gruel, which I think is probably not "gruel" as much as it is *total feces* and Bekhesh was being poetic. "I can't eat this. I... couldn't eat this. I mustn't eat this." He then hums reflectively, and you think for a sec that he's *just that gross*, but he declares that maybe it has another use. Um, making your storyline as fucking sick as every week? Done. Jotheb's all, "In what way, friend Rygel?" and Rygel sandcastles his hands around in it: "Loosening up this soil." Gross me out, but points for thinking.



Aeryn and John jog through the "jungle" and then get in a 'lroid fight about where to go that is usually the D'Argo fight about where to go. John offers that perhaps it's time to take the gauntlet off, and Aeryn says that it's not time to take it off, because the time to take it off is when Bekhesh is dead. At which point, one assumes, there will be a new designated time to take it off. And so on. John tells a very junkie-lookin' Aeryn that really it should come off, and she tells him that in fact she is going to go medieval on the collective asses of the Tavloids, Saint Patrick Genocide style, and once they are all gone, then they can talk about the arm accessory, and he pretends to put it away but stupidly tries to jump her. Um, it's Aeryn. PLUS DRUGS. This is the worst fucking plan. She totally pulls on him, and he's so stupid he deserves to get gauntleted, but D'Argo shows up whence nowhere and calls her out, so they go all d'Artagnan (Athos, Porthos, Aramis: two PKs and a fragrance) about how he called her a coward and she is a freak so can't she just drop the gauntlet and fight him fair and square? And I must admit that until just now I assumed it was because he was still ass-crazy, and that's why this is flimsy, but really, he just needs an excuse to call her a pussy and get her to drop the gauntlet. Which makes him vastly more awesome than I thought before right this second, because I was all, "What are they even fighting about? I'm going to cuddle with John over here until you work it out." Which is why you never doubt D'Argo, basically. She drops the gauntlet, D'Argo tongues her, and she falls...on D'Argo, unpredictably. They might as well have figured out a way where she'd trip onto John's crotch like in every other scene.

Rygel struggles in the shit-mud, talking to Jotheb. (Who's one letter away from somebody who's going to play this exact same penis-measurement game with D'Argo a few-score episodes from now, with far sicker consequences. Crazy, right?) Rygel asks Jotheb for help and Jotheb gives him some tentacle help getting out of the mud -- although it's around His Eminence's neck. Bekhesh enters quietly as Rygel gets himself out of the mud, and Jotheb's useless warning is not exactly helpful. Rygel has his neck under the door (he's so small they had to do the mud thing; I'm so dumb) and Bekhesh treads on it (Rygel's dumber than me) and then...Rygel dies. The fact that there's a commercial break means you're supposed to think it's actually happening. Here's my deal: why so many act-outs on Rygel dying supposedly, when he's the one person whose possible death is the...maybe it's so we'll keep tuning in? Anybody else you'd be on the edge of your chair; Rygel it's like, "I got time for popcorn now. Let's do this shit right!" That's brilliant.

-- Page 15 --

Afterwards, Jotheb asks -- not unkindly but not exactly with a passionate interest -- why Bekhesh would kill the little shit, and Bekhesh is like, "Nobody's going to pay for him." Jotheb, having bought the lie, is like, "The Consortium of Trow will!" He promises to "prove" Rygel's value -- which: I dare a motherfucker -- and Jotheb resuscitates Sparky with a tentacle. So close, yet so far away. Audible screams of disappointment. He'll live to fart another day! Yeah! "The fame of Dominar Rygel has spread even to my worlds," says Jotheb. I don't even know if he's bluffing or what, but I do know I hate him for what he has wrought. "If the ransom is not paid by his people, it will be paid by mine." Bekhesh is like, "He's still got a throat for trodding if you don't, bitch," and takes off as Rygel hacks and coughs his way back to life, still face-down in actual shit. Poor little guy. Poor little non-dead rubber fuckface Muppet. Aww.

Oh, before I forget, somebody called me out a while back for calling Francesca Buller "[Ben Browder's wife](#)" in a *Doctor Who* recap. I'll mention her by name in a non-this show recap first chance I get, but I do want to apologize. She's awesome, and not just for her portrayal of one of my favorite characters ever (Akhna, the Scarran Minister of Ass-Kicking, whom we'll be talking about like eighty recaps from now). I am the asshole, dick move, proceeding on. Aeryn wakes up in a clearing as John's tying his boots and telling her to lie still. Which is akin, especially at this point, to telling John to "not freak out and act bizarre." D'Argo and Aeryn continue to fight, on the perpendicular, about how he called her a coward and she called him a barbarian. Which is funny because it takes the fight into real time, not crazy talk, but also because: exactly. It's an argument about the thing in front of your face: attack it, and you're a barbarian because there's always something worse coming; avoid it, and you're being a coward. The entire point of having both of them on board and in the story: warrior v. soldier. Cannon fodder v. infantry. John tries to get them to blame the whole thing, which in fact has been a plot point in every single episode and will continue to be that forever, on the drugs. (The behavior, as I've said, of an addict. Which...let's talk in a few seasons.) They refuse to validate this spurious assertion, because they are both huge racists, and he points out -- after they join forces to simultaneously look down on him some more ("Tav-*leks*!") -- that this means that they are both fucking nuts. "Whatever. If the gauntlet brings out the real you, both of you? Think long and hard about therapy."

-- Page 16 --

Back to a couple of addicts in the here and now. (And no, I'm not diagnosing all of them like some kind of twelve-stepper on the loose: the throne she sits on is just as real and just as fake as the one Rygel's got zipping around; it's just in her head.) Zhaan sits with Kyr, tries to touch him; he shrugs her off. She asks if he's in pain, and then offers that the 'roids are probably pretty addictive. Come to think of it, "twelve-stepper on the loose" pretty much describes Zhaan to a T. The good and bad of that. "But once your body purifies..." She places her hands on his arm. "The hunger for the drug should pass." He shouts that he's not looking for some "damned sermon," even though she didn't actually give him one yet, and that he "didn't ask" for her help, so she should shove the speeches. It's like he knew what she was going to say before she said it. (Ditto me, because you gotta know I'm all over this shit.) Good on you, Kyr. The ugliest lie anybody ever believed was that you helped yourself by helping other people; all that does is make you more secure in your bullshit because they're worse off. That's vampiric. You help yourself by *helping your fucking self* and leaving the pedestal out of it, and anybody who tells you different is selling you (and more importantly, herself) something. Out of the mouths of steroid-addicted, murderous, lizardy, monstrous beasts of war. As they say. But he softens. "...About the gauntlet. It's not as if I ever had any choice." And having given it a rest for a good six seconds, she's off: "There are always choices." *SLAP!* You know what happens when you slap your TV upside the head? Nothing. Onscreen at least, although you might notice some tenderness in your palm afterwards. Never trust an anarchist, a psych major, or an atheist. At least, not if they won't shut up about it. Red flag. (But I am not advocating slapping them, because they are hair-pullers to a man, and you don't need that screwing up your day. Time and patience.) "Look, I told you, I don't need a

sermon!" He stares at the wall, knowing there's Ayn Rand on the horizon and he's in no mood, and she gives, hilariously. Gorgeously. "...All right. No sermons. What do you need?" He admits, with some reserve but pretty adorable nonetheless, that he is "actually a bit hungry."

Aeryn lies below the sitting D'Argo in the clearing, and Aeryn bitches about not doing anything. His posture -- and he'd never admit it -- is very protective. Her posture -- and she'd never admit it -- is very recuperative. They are waiting for John. I cannot imagine a worse circumstance than waiting for John to get some shit done. I would finish the fingernails and start on the toes within the hour. Even if he were just going out for coffee. D'Argo "admits" that it took him "a few hours" to recover, but manages to turn this into a slam on Sebaceans, to which bait only an eight-year-old boy like Aeryn would rise, given that he outweighs her by like sixty billion tentacled pounds. She tries to stand up and he laughs all "don't be so childish," even though I'm convinced that was like 30% of what he was trying to do there. He relents. "Perhaps it took quite a few hours for me to recover." They talk about how -- as Aeryn props herself on her elbows -- probably John is in a heap of stupid trouble or dead or made a Tavloid whore or whatever hilarious war crime they're both cool with because they are assholes. "Somewhere out there, there's a whole world full of Crichtons," says Aeryn. "How useless that must be." Um, or how fucking fast you'd cash in your IRA to get your ass there so fast. Do we have an Ambassador to this mythical planet yet? Because I am not averse to throwing as many bows as necessary. It's like *diplomacy is my calling* or whatever. D'Argo marvels that simply making fun of John provides them with so much common ground, and Aeryn manages to fuck even that up: "Who would've thought there'd be a race more clumsy and pathetic than the Luxans?!" Ha ha, bitch. D'Argo yanks his arm out from under her and she yelps, and D'Argo apologizes. "You know how clumsy we Luxans can be." Your humble recapper immediately sends him five dollars in the space mail, SWAMFK.

-- Page 17 --

Tavloid jail, where Rygel's back in the hated mud. Jotheb welcomes him to the figurative mud of being "welcomed into the Consortium of Trow," and Rygel tries to politely demonstrate his disinterest without being rude, but Jotheb fills him in on the bushido of it all: "It is not an invitation -- you were killed by Bekhesh, and revived by me. You are therefore owned by me...as are your subjects." Kings are more boring than investment bankers, and let me tell you I have had my fill of investment bankers. Next on the agenda: day-trading stats. The only thing gayer than sabermetrics. ["Hey! Sabermetrics is not gay! ... Okay, it totally is." -- Sars] Rygel's like, "Oh cool, listen, how about you pay my ransom?" Jotheb says no prob, since "billions of Hynerians" are now Trow as well. Rygel can't contain the mirth anymore, and lets Jotheb in on how he was deposed "over a hundred [years] ago," and duh, but it's good, because dig how Rygel thinks it's hilarious how worthless he is, in this context. In the context of the deal. When normally he would hit you or bite you or barf on you, or whatever nasty thing, if you suggested that his dominion were a pipe dream. Telling, right? And in the episode overall, the best thing -- realizing that the drug is not us. In Irish you say, "I have a sadness on me," or a "joy" or whatever. Rygel has a dominion up him, but it's not him, and if you get the situation right, he fucking loves that. Slipping out of the skin of a king, and into that of a wheeler-dealer, at will. Jotheb goes nuts and gets all

smashy about it; you could almost believe that Rygel set this up so Jotheb would bust the cage for him, but Jotheb aims for the particular: "Then you will die here, so why are you laughing?" No answer, no laughter. Just a sad little Muppet with no happiness up him, limp in the mud.

John scouts out the Tavloid siesta and comes back to report on naptime, and Aeryn offers to beat their asses some more. If she could just, you know, get off the ground. John tells her to hang tough and that he and D'Argo can handle it, and she's like, "At least take the drug device that makes you fucking crazy, because you're simply too uncrazy," and he notes that this is a bad idea. "Thing's a menace." Since that's still one gauntlet against a camp of them anyway, he realizes that regardless, their only chance is to be sneaky. Aeryn wonders how she's supposed to cover their retreat, since John blew up the gun (and how? Overload of violence; too much power. Don't give his ass the gauntlet!), and D'Argo offers the Qualta blade...which Voltrons into a gun. (And never actually turns back into a sword, as far as I can remember, for the entire rest of the series. Which is hilarious.) Aeryn lowers herself to using a Luxan weapon, but doesn't bitch about it.

-- Page 18 --

Kyr eats in the dining hall. We're visiting so many of the locations from the Premiere! And in the same order! Docking bay, command, holding cell, dining hall -- and aversive and rebellious and cuffed the whole time, at the hands of a self-professed anarchist! It's almost like there's a conscious parallel! Kyr calls bullshit on the chronically awful *Moya* food, and Zhaan is irritating and hilarious some more: "You're welcome! Thank you for being such a gracious guest!" He laughs, and asks what her whole deal is. What she is. Which somehow manages to be a plot point for like a million episodes, like her being a vegetable person is this huge spoiler. It's not. The fact that she's fucking *Bunnacula*, that's a spoiler. "Older. Wiser. Certainly not as hungry as you." She drops a plate for him, and Kyr asks him about the Delvian trick where she buffered his DTs. "When I kissed you?" He's like, "No? Yes? Um, shut up!" She explains how she's a Delvian Pa'u and calls herself "priest of the Ninth level." Kyr draws a funny mirror about how a Pa'u learns to share pain, while Tavloids learn to inflict it. (What were we saying about how there's no funny so very funny that it won't eventually stab you in the lung with horrible emotion? Fuckin' Zhaan. Ouch.) She says he's impressive in action, and he gets proud, even though it's not actually a compliment, and he proclaims about how he was awesome when they boarded the ship and stole the "king." (Um, that's amazing! You totally said, "Knock knock!" and they were like, "Hey, come on in!" And so you did, and then you stole a two-foot puppet. Will you be my boyfriend?) Zhaan says that's who Kyr is when he wears the gauntlet, but nobody knows who Kyr actually is. Which is a good point, and she's not being so horrible, but Kyr hates that she's even bringing up his junk at all. Which is also kind of valid. "Have you ever been through anything like this before?" she asks. "Your body being freed of poison..." Kyr takes offense at this characterization and says that the *Moya* food is the only poison he's taking in, and she just smiles calmly. "Why would I want to be free? Our gauntlet is our food, our blood, our life! It makes us capable of anything!" He sighs loudly, like she's so thick, and she just asks again what he, "alone," is capable of. A real Ninth level doesn't end a sentence with a preposition,

*Zhaan*. They stare, but neither of them knows the answer. Neither does Rygel, for that matter. Or Aeryn. The imperfection is yours.

-- Page 19 --

John and D'Argo sneak through the Tavloid camp, quietly and for one hundred billion boring years. At the cells, John steps on Jotheb's tentacle and he shouts, and John gibbers and flibbers and mibbers because he apparently has never...seen an alien before? I don't get this part. He's like, "D'Argo! Check out the alien! There are aliens!" Jotheb and D'Argo are like, "Your point please?" John adorably waves goodbye to Jotheb, then finds the scepter on the ground -- sans neural crystal from a thousand pages ago. He also notices about how there's no Rygel, and they take off, but not before Jotheb tells them that "Dominar Rygel" was taken away. I don't get Jotheb's motivation at all. He's like, "I am a hard-ass and I will sell you out and cut off your airflow! But first, a lovely chocolate soufflé I made just for you!" Jotheb explains how the soufflé he cooked for Rygel was to make Bekhesh think he's not worthless, and how they took Rygel away, and none of this benefited him in any way. John offers to get Jotheb out of there, but Jotheb's happy waiting for his ransom -- and sad that the Consortium won't be paying Rygel's. "His presence has been decided to be too disruptive," Jotheb almost laughs. Are we supposed to love him, or think he's an idiot, or be scared of him? He is many things. Outside, John and D'Argo are stopped by some guards. John attempts to strike up a conversation about the ransom and the Tavloids (including, I think, Hontovek from before) are so not feeling up to a conversation, because they are high on drugs.

"...Because they are high on drugs" is the ending of 7% of all sentences referencing this show. Science told me! Aeryn fires from the forest a few feet behind them, and there are fisticuffs, in which even John gets to take part. Shooting, shooting, fighting, Qualta-ing, gauntlet-ing, jumping. Spray-painted flora. Up the hill, Aeryn explains to John that she has just demonstrated a damn diversion, and congratulates D'Argo on his Qualta. He requests that she bury him with it, and then collapses. There's a giant wound in his back, and black nasty blood all over!

John somehow manages to carry D'Argo back further into the forest, Aeryn covering. John says some Pat The Bunny stuff meant to comfort, but D'Argo just wants to know what color his blood is. John says it's almost totally black, and Aeryn responds by...kneeling and punching D'Argo fiercely, directly on the wound. John grabs her and asks what the fuck, and she explains Luxans: "The wound isn't cleansed until the blood flows clear." D'Argo yells to get her punch on, and as John looks on, afraid and confused, I take the opportunity to ask: is there a better metaphor for the entire way this show works? You're not safe until the blood runs clear -- until you've bled the toxins out, and healed. And you have to keep bashing it, if you ever want to get your shit together and working properly. Welcome to *Farscape*. You now know everything you need to know.

-- Page 20 --

Up on *Moya*, Kyr sets down his fork-object and yawns, and protests to Zhaan that he's not tired in any way. As she's offering to take him to his "quarters" (note), Pilot requests her presence on command. Kyr says he knows his way back, and for some reason, Zhaan's anarchism chooses this moment -- as she's been joyfully smothering him up to this point -- to reassert itself. "Total junkie with a hostile regiment with whom

we're currently in a shooting battle which has perhaps fatally injured one of my crew? And he's got the shakes from withdrawal? And the drug of which he is a total junkie is *rage itself*? Have fun! No unscheduled detours, though, okay? Honor system!" Big blue idiot arrives on command, where they have a pointless conversation about how John needs to know where the shuttle went so they can find Rygel, which they could have had any fucking place, and this is a stupid way to get Kyr loose. Which complication also means nothing to the story whatsoever, making it doubly irritating. Down planetside, there's a cute callback to last week, as Aeryn draws out the coordinates Zhaan gave them in the dirt and explains what they mean. Kyr tries to bust into a lockbox in the maintenance bay, ripping a tool off a poor DRD, which causes Pilot to go all Butterfly McQueen, and Zhaan goes down to maintenance to get him.

Tavleakistan. Aeryn finishes up the directional vector lesson, which I imagine took not so long considering John is an *astronaut* and there are *translator microbes* and there's only so many ways to describe *three-dimensional space*. But it's cute with all the sharing of knowledge, so whatever. John says that between the comedown and the black blood, neither Aeryn nor D'Argo is up for a sprint, which is what it's going to take to get to the camp before the shuttle...takes off, or arrives, or something. Where there's Rygel and a small window to find him. I'm only here for Zhaan this week, I don't really care why this is happening, because the whole point is that John's going to have to put on the...yep. Here we go. He picks up the gauntlet and asks them how it works. D'Argo's noncommittal answer is translated by John's crazyness microbes as comparable to the Green Lantern's ring, meaning willpower and no yellow stuff, and the needles dig in and he grunts, and I gotta say that the only thing worse than giving it to D'Argo is giving it to Aeryn, right, but the only thing worse than that? Is happening. "That's funny. I don't feel anything. In fact, I feel pretty good. Feel *real* good..." Face goes crazy and kinda...never mind. You can tell it's working, is the point. So can he. He takes off.

-- Page 21 --

Kyr is messing with a syringe in the lab, and Zhaan gets all scary tough love on him, snatching it away. "Is this the way you repay my help? How would you like your arm torn off?" That's your fucking theme song, asshole. He laughs and says she doesn't scare him (always a bad idea, girlfriend is scary as hell) and says she doesn't have the guts to fight him. Anybody with a brain looks away at this point, because what will happen is obviously going to be unlovely at best. She goes all Krav Maga on him and gets him in a hold, and explains some stuff very carefully. "Hear me. I could rip you apart. Right now. Kahalin help me, I'd enjoy it. But you know why I don't? Because we're not enemies!" She crumples the syringe before his eyes, and gives him some clich  s to the solar plexus. "This is your enemy!" Her voice is still utterly terrifying and her manner is very Old Testament, so don't tell her I made fun of that part.

"Contemplate that in solitude!" she rumbles. Um, I will. Ma'am.

John is a speed racer. Meanwhile, Aeryn and D'Argo hang out with blood all over the place. The blood's not going clear yet, and D'Argo just drops his head and moans.

"Give it up!" Aeryn flips the script on him: "Oh, so you'd die without putting up a fight? Then you're the coward!" BOOM she hits the wound. "And you're the barbarian.

You're gonna have to hit it a lot harder than that, to increase the bleeding." She makes



this great face, like, "Fucking okay then!" and slams him again. He groans and asks for more. I don't know what to do with this show sometimes. She puts her fists together and volleyballs them into him a bunch of times.

This scene is a really long period of time for the not much that happens, so here's what happens: Bekhesh has Rygel in a sack. Where he belongs. John comes out with the gauntlet all brandishy, like a moron. After he takes down two Tavloids, one of them catches on, and shoots, but he snags the shot and returns it. Which is admittedly bad-ass every time. Rygel bitches in the sack; he is soundly ignored by everybody, because they are all high on drugs. And because Rygel sucks and does not contribute. John and Bekhesh move on from the gauntlets to a more accurate measure of manhood, and swinging those all over the place. Rygel continues to suck, inside a bag. John and Bekhesh start fighting again and it's very shooty. John runs out of juice, and then remembers that he's totally fucking *John Crichton* and he brought *himself* to a *gun fight*, so he switches over to "I'm so clever" John really fast. He says it should be a draw because he doesn't want Rygel anyway, because Rygel's not a king actually (both Rygel and Bekhesh are surprised to hear that), he's an escaped mental patient. Rygel gives an astute observation on the subject of "Let he who is without crazy," but Bekhesh kicks his rubber ass hard through the sack. John changes horses midstream and says that actually, Rygel has...chicken pox. I love this man John Crichton. John says that Rygel is, again, worthless, and has no ransom to speak of; Bekhesh touches that the Consortium of Trow will, and John drops a 'fraid-not on that one. "The four-throated cat? They're not gonna do it. Well, you blame them? Rygel is an obnoxious gas-bag. Now, who's gonna shell out for that?" (It's not the truth, it's the crazy drugs that...oh, wait. Yeah, it's the truth.) Rygel shouts from the bag that it's all true, "I'm unloved, unwanted, unpopular," and Bekhesh's foot agrees, knocking him senseless again. "Unconscious..." John levels -- because John can only tell a lie for five minutes before it falls apart, which is like so cute -- that there's nothing to pay the ransom with, and that Rygel lied about all of it. Bekhesh begins to believe him.

-- Page 22 --

Zhaan comes to Kyr and offers her comm badge, affixed to her wrist, through the bars of his cell: "Your leader wishes to speak with you." I love how she's just arbitrarily over Kyr ("Bored of feeding my ego with your junkie bullshit! Next!") Kyr reports to Bekhesh, who asks if they have any money or riches or, you know, food. Or anything cool. He looks at Zhaan, hard. "I won't lie for you." It's an interesting moment, because it's that potlatch reversal thing: we would all assume that he's supposed to say yes, so when Zhaan tells him to tell the truth, she's not being manipulative, she's actually being real. Tell the truth; they can deal. But it also means that when Kyr does tell the truth, he's making the choice. "It's pathetic. They have no riches and all I've had to eat is food cubes." Bekhesh asks if they're forcing this reply, and asks if they're mistreating Kyr, and offers to slaughter everybody if he's not being treated well. "No..." he says, looking into Zhaan's eyes. "In fact, they've been trying to help me." This does not compute with Bekhesh, and Kyr's like, "Yeah, I don't know either." Zhaan turns off her comm, and gives him one of her patented holy smiles. "Perhaps I like to offer choices." Especially when people validate my mystique!

Bekhesh stares at John, I guess -- it's hard to say with the eyeholes -- and John's like, "If you don't believe me, start shooting, because we're done here," and drops his gauntlet onto the grass. He twitches a little bit due to the withdrawal and the horrible needles. "It's been so long since anyone's told me the truth, I don't recognize it anymore." Oh, cry to me, you old bitch. He kicks the bag over to John, who opens up the sack and asks Rygel quietly about the crystal. Rygel takes umbrage because of course they wouldn't come down just for him. Rygel's really gross and dirty right now because of the mud. John investigates him and Rygel says, sneakily, "It's safe and sound." John calls Rygel "Fluffy" for the first time, but demonstrates he's seen enough of this show to know that bodily functions are about to come into play, so whatever, let's get back to the Adrenaline Twins, because obviously you swallowed the crystal, because you are gross.

"Well? Am I to live, or die?" asks D'Argo, and Aeryn "jokes" that he's going to die, "but not today," she smiles, leaning in and showing him her hand, with the clear blood on it. Ha ha! Rygel and John bitch at each other as they approach. I love how over one act basically took place with *something* in a sack, bitching in VO, which the actors all pretended was a person. Now he's just wrapped in John Crichton's intense arms. John arrives, and immediately his eyes roll back and he drops. On top of Rygel. DRINK!

-- Page 23 --

Aeryn stands outside Rygel's quarters, listening to him shit. Now, I cannot believe that I have to tell you about a scene where this beautiful lady had to listen to a Muppet take a dump, and I am relatively removed from the scene as it takes place. I'm not even watching it, I'm writing this recap from my notes while listening to some bullshit Strokes demo, and I still can't believe it. So I want you to imagine being that lady, because I cannot. D'Argo arrives and they yell at him, and then there's a joke that I won't recap, except to say that Aeryn does a great inner shudder move at the end of the joke I won't recap.

In command, Zhaan answers a transmission from Kyr, honestly curious about how he's doing. "Much better," he says, "now." And he holds up the gauntlet, of course, because this is the lesson she's got to learn, and we'll keep telling her until she arrives at the truth. There's a real grace in the way she calmly looks on him; a beauty that contains all the love in the world, unshakeable, caring and remote as the ocean. "My choice," he says, not exactly begging her to understand where he's coming from. She does. Not as much as she knows, but enough that her love outweighs the disappointment. They look at each other for some time, and he finally nods, and hangs up, and it's the only time I ever really love her, the way she deserves to be loved, at least: "No sermons," she says softly, and sadly, to herself.

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## - Live Through This With Me -

-- Page 1 --

Somebody's eyeball. Is this [Lost](#)? No, it's a Muppet eyeball. They killed off all their Muppets long ago. Guess it's Rygel's eyeball. Guess we're going to be getting into some shit with Rygel this week. I hope he's going to be okay. When they do the eyeball thing on *Lost* it means you're going to be bored out of your mind the entire time with a bunch of flashbacks that don't matter whatsoever except for the Kieslowskian joy of seeing people you don't care about cross over into the lives of other people you don't care about, and then you go have an Asperger's orgasm on the internet. And yes, I've seen every episode the week it aired so I'm not being a hater, but I vastly preferred the second season to the first so I'm willing to concede that what I am is: *crazy*.

Everybody's on Command marveling at a really jacked-up ship outside. John's like, "That's big." Pilot's like, "That's dead." Aeryn's like, "It's not Crais's so I don't care. Except I kind of do." D'Argo's like, "That's still a PK ship." Aeryn wonders what's going on with the ship even being in the Uncharted Territories and assumes there's something horrible happening, because while she always thinks that, she's also *always right*. John wonders how big the guy that beat the dead ship must be, and Zhaan agrees with him that it's time to lay a patch away from "this tomb." D thinks there might be info onboard, though, that would get them home; Aeryn wants to go gun shopping. The warriors want to go get on that haunted wreck, the others are creeped out, Pilot abstains. "And I need to know who she is," says Aeryn, which makes me sad. Because the kind of ship that it is, is the kind of ship she spent her entire childhood on, and if she's mourning for her entire life being gone, she needs to put some names to some things. Who knows it? Rygel: "It's the *Zelbinion*." He does not sound happy about this, which I guess is why the eyeball.

Aeryn, John, and D'Argo get their badass suits on in the armory and D'Argo explains that the *Zelbinion* is the most feared ship in the Peacekeeper Armada. One good thing about this very awesome episode is how by the end of it you'll kind of never want to hear the name of it either, because it gives you the willies to even think about, and you'll be completely right in feeling that way. Bad juju. John notes that the people who beat her up didn't really seem to think that she was that amazing. Aeryn explains that she was lost in battle over a hundred years ago, and Zhaan comms in to confirm she's still got atmo. "Pilot cautions you remain starboard and high. Most of the vacuum damage was sustained in attack from below."

-- Page 2 --

They get ready to board, John worries aloud whether this is actually a good idea, because he can feel the bad juju from here, and Aeryn tells him to stay on Moya if he wants. She doesn't really imply that he is a big baby, because she doesn't think of him as a combatant, ever: just someone to be protected. Not so D'Argo, whom she checks in with, and the three of them head in.

John wows (and exoposits) about how Aeryn was on a ship like this her entire life. She gestures around with her flashlight and there's a sweet little bite in it: "When you told me endless tales of your home, you spoke of forests and rivers and valleys," she says -- and it's the "endless" that makes it art -- but she was just imagining these walls. "Well, I'm sure it looks better with carpeting." D'Argo says even the Luxans thought the *Zelbinion* was known as "invincible," and then John totally snakes [my joke from two weeks ago](#) about the *Titanic*. "Even the big ones go down." John then sees a

skeleton in the ceiling and wigs impressively. Even the big ones, as they say. (Just found out the original line was what we heard, "Just ask Leo DiCaprio," but in fact we got the lovely ad-lib "Just ask Bill Clinton." Which is dirty and a little mean to my girl [Monica](#), but does preserve the "one blowjob joke per episode" rule Ben Browder seems to have set for himself.)

Zhaan doesn't even need her pretentious vegetable powers to figure out that Rygel's freaking out. He tells her, staring out, terrified, that it was the first ship he was tortured on, when he was first deposed 130 years ago. *Tortured*. On. (Quickly: in the last scene we compared the *Zelbinion* to Urp -- Plastic/Organic, Fascist/Awesome, Fear/Love -- and now it's *Zelbinion* and Moya. No wonder Rygel loves her so much.) D'Argo bitches about how they've been all over and there's nothing to salvage. Aeryn cocks a brow: "How disappointing that other scavengers have robbed us of our glory." This has got to be awful for her. I had a whole thing here but John says it better at the end. D'Argo calls it game over, since the nav console is gone and there aren't any star charts. John notes something with lights still going, and Aeryn realizes that somebody has fixed the comms up. D'Argo growls. I know, right? This is like every horror movie ever! Don't turn on the TV or pick up the phone or the next thing you know it's "Don't go into the light Carol-Ann" and then everybody involved dies from some mysterious curse. *This shit is totally haunted*. John asks how recently this happened, and they start looking around, and there's another PK skeleton for John to worry about, and then out of nowhere this blonde chick comes running and slams into him. Foul! My John only bumps into *one* Peacekeeper for no reason whatsoever!

-- Page 3 --

Just kidding, I adore this particular PK girl. Who doesn't? D'Argo and Aeryn, who open fire on her without even thinking. John jumps in front of her and yells at them, and they calm down...just in time for the woman to ask to get shot at some more: "Officer Sun. The escaped prisoners." Aeryn steps up in her face and stares her down. John's like, "How does she know this?" Why, because she's from Crais's ship. John takes a giant step back, like a Mother May I-size step, and then there are credits.

"You will remain in review stance until I dismiss, understood? Name. Division.

Assignment." We haven't seen this Aeryn in a while. It's totally gross. There's a lid on it so you can't actually tell how much of this is fear and how much is just the kind of asshole Peacekeepers are. "Gilina Renais," says the girl, and Aeryn yells at her to speak up. "Tramco support, maintenance provost," Gilina says, and Aeryn Cool Hand Lukes all over her: "Chin up! Eyes locked!" It's hard. John tells her to give it a rest, "Miss Drill Sergeant," and check out how Gilina's about to pass out, and Aeryn attacks John. Keep the lid on, lady. John reminds Aeryn that he's not like Gilina, which is a somewhat weird thing to say unless he's trying to distract Aeryn, or actually thinks she's going to beat him up, and then Aeryn says something very telling: "Not remotely. She is a tech."

And John is a what? Out in the gray space, between the only white and black she ever knew. He's not a soldier, he's a scientist. But if it's John, that doesn't mean he's a tech, because then he would be beneath her, and he's not, exactly. So he's not "remotely" like Gilina. I wonder what he'd say about that.

"Not a soldier, right? No weapons, so why don't you lighten up?" Aeryn explains, again, how PKs work: it's Gilina's duty to notify Crais about the prisoners, and

cheerfully lie to them about it. She gets right up in his face and it is not sexy even a little bit: "This is my world, John. Don't interfere." She's harder than she's ever been. Not more but less. It's terrifying.

Rygel fights Pilot on how there's somebody alive: "She can't be from the original..." Oh, man. Pilot prisses at him that (a) he doesn't know about any of that and (b) Rygel can bloody well go investigate the situation himself if he's going to get uppity. I don't know if he knows about Rygel's freakout, but I think he does, and that makes it even meaner and funnier. Rygel grumbles about the fuck he will, and Zhaan approaches him, and touches his shoulder, and asks how long they've known each other. "Long enough for me to see your blue backside meditating. But not long enough for you to touch me." His dignity comes and goes at the oddest times. I could kiss him right now. "Confront your demons, Rygel. Or they will chase you from the shadows to the pyre." One more week, Blue. Get it all out now, while I still love you.

-- Page 4 --

Gilina explains that Crais didn't have time for any ghost ship bullshit when he had bizarre revenge/sex stuff to do to our innocent friends, so he ordered her unit aboard the *Zelbinion* for a tech survey and left them there. Then he ran off across the Uncharted Territories with his stupid ponytail swinging, all in a hurry, and then...failed to find Moya or do anything interesting or important. You know, it occurs to me that I've never recapped old Bipolar, have I? Oohhh, his stupid ass is getting a facefull of buckshot next week too.

(Zhaan, Bipolar *and* Maldis, for fuck's sake. So why's it one of my favorites? I get to bitch at length, that's why. And also because it's really, really good.)

Crichton offers Gilina some food and inquires after the rest of the survey team. Two days after they got there, some ship showed up and blew hell out of their Marauder with a strange weapon, stranding them. Then I guess they came onboard and killed everybody. (Gilina just swung from dirty and angular to *fucking gorgeous*, by the way. I should mention that. She looks like if Naomi Watts had the blonde hair back when she did *Tank Girl*.) D'Argo comes in explaining it was the Sheyang (HATE. They look like [Sir John Tenniel's](#) frog footman, crossed with a dog's anus, and they shoot fire out of their stupid anus faces.) John's like, "They did all this?" And instead of saying, "No, you *douchebag*, they didn't simultaneously attack this ship *just the other day* and a *hundred years ago*," D'Argo just characterizes them as "nothing more than opportunistic foragers." For he is a far, far better man than I.

Aeryn asks Gilina -- less harshly but not like she won't shoot her ass in the eye for kicks -- to tell her the story of how the *Zelbinion* died. Gilina starts to -- "Long before we arrived, other scavengers pulled loose the data spools: there's no record" -- but then remembers to tell Aeryn off. "Officer Sun, I think you should know I consider you a traitor and therefore worthy of the punishment it merits." Then she relents, like she's in any position to do so. "But as a Sebacean, I believe you are as deserving as I to know the truth about a cultural treasure. I am not lying when I say I do not know." I wish she did, because then Aeryn would like her, because she'd be coming more than halfway toward her, but on the other hand, then Aeryn would probably shoot her, and that would be sad. And not in Aeryn's best interest, frankly, in the fullness of time, but we don't know that yet, and I'm taking bets on whether or not Aeryn's going to shoot her at any given point. It's like 2:1 right now thanks to the whole "you deserve to die"

thing, even if she did try to soften the blow with a "...But I still don't know, buddy."  
(Also, FYI: the *Zelbinion* is only a "cultural treasure" if your culture is deeply, deeply fucked up.)

-- Page 5 --

Rygel -- who will always take a deep breath when he has to -- comes into the *Zelbinion* on his Jazzy. I admit I didn't expect him to follow through this time, because I don't want him to be all upset. I mean, I don't care at all if he lives or dies, but he's so intractable and full of himself that seeing him weird like this is really kind of upsetting. Like if you saw [Donald Trump](#) fall down on his old man ass. You'd laugh, but it would be really unsettling.

D'Argo runs off with some 'babble and Aeryn says they'll meet him or whatever, and takes the lead. Behind her, John and Gilina are having a chat about how he's really not Sebacean. "Human. It's kinda like Sebacean, but we haven't conquered other worlds yet so we just kick the crap out of each other." Funnier -- again -- seven years ago than it is right now. Gilina thanks him for, you know, stopping Aeryn from killing her dead before. "I try to save a life a day. Usually it's my own." And in that case it's usually somebody else doing it, Mister Man.

They come into the middle of a big awesome bay with lots of science all over the place, and John stupidly exclaims about what if the Peacekeepers used their science and technology to do good instead of evil, and Aeryn, feeling more Sebacean than she has in a long, long time, and who could blame her, gets right up in his face. "To do what? To fulfill your vision of who we should be? We are Peacekeepers. Other cultures hire us to keep order. To keep harmony." Honey, "we" are not doing any of those things. Just because it smells like home doesn't mean you're twenty again.

Also: context, like with the PK stuff last week, is everything. Art shouldn't imitate life if it's in the future; it's too sad. I do love her in her pride here though, showing us what a real live Peacekeeper, one of them that really believed, would say. She's the only one. Put her in this environment, burned out and horrible just like her life, and she'll backflip away from John's corrupting influence so fast. Back from science to war, back across the line to less. But also and finally, I like how this triangle has three sides: instead of telling John not to talk to Gilina, she's siding *with* Gilina, obliquely, against him. Which is like AP Mean Girl shit and takes a fine and detailed hand because it's easy to fuck up. I'm proud of her for trying, but also for being so fucking scary this whole episode that nobody's going to call her on it.

-- Page 6 --

Rygel enters with more of that real-life parallel stuff I don't like right now, about how "keeping order and harmony" is flytastic but also: "...Assassinations, torture, kidnappings..." He coughs and spits a huge wad onto Gilina's face and wishes it were last week. John grabs him and calls him "Weasel" and tells him to knock it off. "I've barely got used to sharing my accommodation with one of these abominations. Dispel the thought of two!" Only one of them is an abomination; which one depends on where you're standing. He knows that. On the other hand, put him in this environment -- burned out and horrible, just like when his life as a Dominar ended, here on this ship -- and he'll backflip away from Zhaan's calming influence so fast. Back from pride to shame, back across the line to less. And he's not got a lot of ground to spare on the more v. less front.



Later on, Rygel's Jazzin' around the *Zelbinion* when he suddenly and violently goes crazy with a horrible effect not seen since like MÃ©liÃ©s invented space: some effed-up PK dude staring at him across the entire screen and going "BOO!" Not really, he just welcomes him "home," but the horrible apparition might as well have a flashlight to its chin. Rygel wigs.

Commercial. D'Argo confirms Gilina's story -- "gutted to worthlessness" is what he calls it -- and Gilina is very sad to see a dead dude from her unit deadin' it up on the floor. D'Argo nods: "Sheyang victim. Burned to death." Gilina says the guy's name, horrified, and Aeryn snaps to: "Officer Karanda? What was he doing guiding the likes of you? This is grot's work." Gilina drops the brand new bomb that Aeryn's entire unit was demoted when Aeryn left the PKs and will only be reinstated when she's dead. I forget: does that mean Crais is an asshole, or that the PKs are categorically assholes? Hmm.

Pilot asks Zhaan to confirm for him -- on "Scan Vector Gamma" -- if there's a Sheyang ship hanging around just outside sensor range, and of course there is.

Upon hearing this, Aeryn sublimates her rage from before by slamming Gilina against a bulkhead really hard: "Why are the Sheyangs back? What didn't you tell us?" D'Argo thinks maybe they should kill Gilina if she doesn't help them out with a quickness.

Aeryn wonders if cooperating with the Sheyangs is what saved Gilina's life, and Gilina -- bright girl -- decides this is the time for taunting: "I am not the traitor. You are." A simple "no" would probably be best here. Aeryn continues to growl and John comes into the room and pulls her off Gilina again. Somehow John got stronger than Aeryn, but just for this episode; he holds her off even as she's charging Gilina again. "She knew they were coming back!" Aeryn screams. "She knew!"

-- Page 7 --

John completes the triangle and sides with Aeryn -- who's right now the attacking one, just like before when it was John attacking the PK way of life -- and tells Gilina evenly, "She's not a traitor, not by a long shot. Crais never gave her a chance. Not like the chance we're giving you." There's kind of a subtle "Acting like a jerk is going to get us both killed by crazy Aeryn" in there somewhere. Whatever, it chills Gilina out considerably, and she tells the obvious truth that she just hid while the Sheyangs were looting. "They said they were gonna come back for the DS." And John speaks Tech:

"Defense Shield?" Gilina explains that it's not exactly operational, but it's less damaged than everything else. God forbid John have a conversation with a Tech, of course, so Aeryn grabs Gilina by the face and shoves her down the corridor:

"Move! Go!" She's probably just worried about the Sheyangs. I'm sure that's it.

D'Argo enters Moya's Command, where Zhaan is reading screens. "Their plasma conductor is targeted on us," she says, and then suggests that they signal their intent to leave, and then "depart without incident." D'Argo explains that this is asking for deadness, because the Sheyang are that kind of alien that attacks weakness and flees from strength. Like most other kinds of aliens on this show except for the really cool ones. (Oh, MAN! I gotta write about the effin' dog people later! Tsk. This show.)

Zhaan offers a plan B: "We get the others on board, we decouple, and then attempt to starburst." D'Argo says that the Sheyang will be blowing them up well before that, and Zhaan whines that Moya has "no offensive capabilities -- nothing to signal strength." (Wishing you and your little flying girlfriend had some guns, are ya? Hmm. *That's* not

very "Zhaan," is it? I guess sometimes choosing the self-importantly pacifist option just doesn't cut it, does it?) D'Argo's like, "I know! I hate how Moya has no guns! Finally we understand each other!"

Gilina says the DS is fucked...but then figures out that it's not, if she just blah blah blah, and Aeryn tells her to shut up and do it. "Officer Sun, I know you're not a tech, but..." and it's neat, because she's following protocol -- if you're talking to infantry, kiss ass, because they're the ones in charge, because they're the ones with guns -- and Aeryn's just like, "Eh, just tell me." Gilina says it all depends on the power reserves, but they're looking at eight hours, minimum. And the Sheyang are totally vulturing around above their head trying to figure out Moya, which is *not* going to take eight hours, so Aeryn prepares to go off yet again, but John jumps in with some 'babble, which to Gilina is like the sweetest music plus a Belgian waffle amount of hot Crichton lovin'. Yeah. That'll take the itch off Aeryn's trigger finger like friggin' *Gold Bond*.

-- Page 8 --

D'Argo worries about what we all just worried about and then we cut to the Sheyang ship for two seconds -- one stupid froggy laughs about how Moya's a pussy and the other stupid froggy says that Leviathans don't ever come into the Uncharted Territories so they're going to bag this awesome rare creature -- and then Zhaan informs everybody that their weapons countdown has begun. Countdown. Why? John tells Aeryn that Moya needs some anti-froggy help and Aeryn's like, "Too late," and even D'Argo's like, "I guess maybe we'll just have to live on the *Zelbinion* then, if they blow Moya up." Pilot: "D'Argo? Zhaan? Moya and I are very afraid of fire." Aww. See, we can't be having that kind of shit. Figure it out, people.

D'Argo bitches and moans about how they don't have guns some more, which is so very helpful, and he works himself into a total froth and stops making sense and starts screaming and growling and acting a mess in Luxan -- which is the opposite of how translator microbes work, but we're not going to talk about that -- which is...actually quite helpful. As D'Argo gets hyper, Zhaan smoothly tells Pilot to transmit D'Argo's wobbler to the Sheyangs. Pilot asks why and Zhaan tells him to just fucking do it.

"A Luxan? We're fighting a Luxan? Terminate fire! Terminate plasma attack!"

Zhaan tells Pilot to take the little show off the air, and Pilot wows. "They're powering down their weapons!" Zhaan congratulates D'Argo on buying them time. I guess I spoke too soon about the whole pacifist angle. When she brings peace it won't be through violence and it won't be through submission: it's the illusion of violence and power that saved them this week. And if the Sheyangs had seen through the illusion, they wouldn't have cheated themselves out of a DS, but fearing something gives it power, and that's something you do to yourself. Ask His Eminence. He knows.

"Right. No lies. Does this ship have any weapons aboard that are still active?"

"Anything we can use to fight back?" Gilina's like, "Um, for the hundredth time, no? Have we not been over this?" John asks if the DS wouldn't be helpful, in terms of, say, *defense*. "The question is, will it stop the Sheyang attack?" Can you put aside fear long enough to find another way to save yourself? Aeryn says they can't stall for eight hours, duh, and John says that if he helps Gilina, they can do it in four. Which is less than eight, so he's got them there.

Cut from some broadcasts: They stare at him because he is Crichton. He's like, "Some kind of union thing I don't know about?" Funny. Gilina's like, "It's really

complicated? Sophisticated wiring?" And as he's ripping off the array cover to get to work, he harrumphs, "Yep. And I love opera."

-- Page 9 --

Zhaan tries to get D'Argo to yell at the Sheyang some more: "It's not my face they are afraid of." D'Argo tells her he doesn't lie to his opponents in battle, no matter how wily she is. "It's not lying," she says. "Simply mislead them," she says. He says she has a flexible morality for a priest, and I cannot argue with him. Neither can she: "Well, I apologize. It must be done, and you must do it." And okay, that's what it always comes down to, with Zhaan. I wouldn't yell quite so loud if I didn't love her, and I will say this: every stupid, asshole thing she ever does, she does it to save Moya and every person on Moya, and because there's nothing else to be done. Which means that the stupid, scary shit she does is twice the sacrifice, because it's also her holy, perfect image of herself that she's sacrificing. For them. An image she spent hundreds of years -- crazy, locked in a room, screaming -- bleeding to build, so she could live with herself. And that's all she's asking D'Argo to do, after all, and I...don't think I can hate her anymore, as of right this second. Maybe next week won't be so fun after all.

Gilina arghs in frustration and John asks mildly if she screwed something up. "This isn't going to work. The main fusion panel is charred. John's like, "Gilina, you told Aeryn you could do this. And your face looks way better not blown off, so..." Gilina levels that she didn't want to be executed for failing to try. Which: I hate Peacekeepers, don't you? John tries to explain once more that they are not killers, and Gilina points out how he totally killed Bipolar's brother. And look how well that went. John finally gets pissed and spits out the truth, how it was [a fender-bender that easily could have killed John instead](#). And you can't get all [bus crash](#) about that plot point either, because once Crais shows up it's twice as obnoxious and pointless and you'll wish John had just killed them both. Them *and* their ponytails.

So just as they're reaching a quiet kind of loving understanding between Techs, who walks in carrying some massive equipment? Aeryn, who angrily asks if they'd like a lovely snack. "Something chilled?" Gilina -- calling her "Officer Sun" -- gingerly notes that the wires Aeryn's packing are the wrong kind. Aeryn grumps that she's looked everywhere, and Gilina suggests a couple of places she could look. Aeryn does not want to leave! Gilina starts to give her directions and Aeryn's like, "I know where it is, dude." Three things not to do to Aeryn if you're a cute Tech Girl getting sweaty with Commander John Crichton: Criticize her tech knowledge. Boss her around. Tell her where shit is. "That door's jammed!" Gilina shouts as Aeryn takes off. That's four! Betting is now closed!

-- Page 10 --

The Sheyangs and D'Argo bitch about salvage rights for awhile and finally D'Argo tells them they can have the stupid ship once his soldiers are back on Moya. One stupid froggy tells the other stupid froggy that D'Argo is bluffing and there aren't any soldiers. They bust out their business to compare size once and for all, and Zhaan whispers lines to D'Argo: "Your quaint cockpit seems to belie any military posts." The froggies call him a jerkface but sign off. Zhaan congratulates him on his entrance into the world of lying for fun and he tells her to stop with the prompting. Pilot tells them that "if we are to believe the Peacekeeper Tech," they only have to carry on this charade for two more hours. "Three conversations without substance are enough. The next one, I

believe, will spur an attack." D'Argo's right, of course, but it's still cool: they're fronting weapons, maybe on both sides, but they're both doing it in order to get ahold of technology that is entirely defensive.

John is describing to Gilina a movie which is neither *Fight Club* nor *D.E.B.S.*, but is in fact *Lethal Weapon 3*. Could not get away from Mel Gibson back then. (If you don't remember, that's the one where Riggs met Rene Russo, and they fell in love because first of all she's *Rene Freakin' Russo*, but also they had a shitload in common, like to the point that she was basically the female Riggs. Hmm.) She points out that this is not entertaining, and he shrugs. "Yeah, well, you know, it replaced cock fighting." Gilina gets a spark in her eye and cries out, and John gets all "Hush hush my darling" about it, and she accidentally smacks him in *his* eye, and oh, how they laugh. *Where's Aeryn?* John says about how in movies like that, "The guy and the girl always end up surviving. Liking each other." Gilina says that the Sebaceans have stories like that too. "It's a small universe," John murmurs. *Where in hell is Aeryn?*

The DRDs are all very interested in Rygel right now because they've never seen a Dominar hallucinating and shitting himself from PTSD. It's sad. Durka drags Rygel down a corridor, all, "We've just begun!" Zhaan finds him and chides him softly: "We've been looking all over for you, Rygel. You are making the DRDs nervous." She tells him -- usually a surefire winner -- that they're in need of his "negotiating talents." Which I guess makes sense, because D'Argo just goes "Bleargh blooey fluuuuurgh" right now, and Zhaan isn't feeling the Sheyang like at all. "I think I was meant to die here the first time. That's why the spirits have brought me back to the *Zelbinion*," Rygel sniffs. Oh, mister. Zhaan tells him, for starters, that Durka's dead. Rygel admits it's in his head. That's the saddest part. "Then you must confront him," she tells him softly. "Find his corpse. It will set you free." Blue's a little creepy sometimes but I'm feeling her right now on this. If Rygel *knows* he's going nuts, that's so much worse than if he didn't believe Durka was really dead. Admitting it out loud? Hell no. That's just as bad as "Moya and I are afraid of fire."

-- Page 11 --

One stupid froggy calls bullshit on the other stupid froggy and beats him up and takes control of the stupid froggy ship and decides to shoot Moya right this second. "Ignite the plasma generators!"

Aeryn runs up to John and Gilina, on comms with Moya: "What do you mean they're firing? What did you say to them?" D'Argo says they just stopped responding to his signal. Gilina tells John they're close to finishing -- "Disconnect all the black wires. The black ones. *Here*." -- and Pilot informs us that they've got less than a minute left. "Officer Sun. Pass me up those connections. Yes." Everybody's very nervous and working hard. Forty seconds. Thirty. Twenty. "Like this," Gilina explains to Aeryn. "Clip it. Got it?" Ten seconds. "One more, okay?" Five seconds. Aeryn, Gilina, and John all check in: "Got it!" Like three little Techs in a pod, working in concert. Like equals. So the defense screen forms around Moya, of course. Just as the Sheyang fire on her. Pilot, relieved, tells everybody the DS worked, and the stupid froggies yell at each other and fight a bunch, and Rygel is in a cage on the *Zelbinion*. "I am very disappointed in you. Somehow I expected the Dominar of Hyneria to be more...dominating," Durka says.

Pilot and Zhaan tell everybody that there are gaps in the DS shield. Gilina explains that this DS is technically only half of one: a real DS is two identical shields, overlaid. This 'babble is unnecessary, I don't know why there's this extra layer of BS on the idea that they're going to get the DS when the *Zelbinion* is horrible and also completely finished for good, except that the story's running pretty thin as it is. John yells and stuff and asks if they couldn't just install one of the shields on Moya then. "I have been sworn never to compromise Peacekeeper technology with the enemy." Seemingly unending pause. "I will do it for you. For you." Duh.

The froggies fight about things, and the one that mutinied on the other one is basically forced by reasons of honor to go to the *Zelbinion* and kill everybody aboard. Seriously, the whole deal takes about five seconds and he's like, "Okay, I'm going down there to kill everybody, for honor." Also known, again, as "How we got three acts out of this bitch."

Gilina and John flirt about the following things. 1) "Deep space technology," which they both love. 2) "Cosmic theory," which "intrigues" Gilina and in which John has his doctorate. 3) What is a doctorate. 4) Falling into each other like fornicators who do not believe in love but only their whorish gravitational needs. 5) Human men and Sebacean men are much the same. 6) Ditto the respective ladies. Then Gilina kisses his forehead, sweetly, and he kisses her on the lips. She licks her lips, surprised, and then they go on kissing. *Where is...* Oh, crap! Aeryn walks in talking: "I've set up four of the components..." Her voice like they're all three pals, Techs, getting science done. And she spots them. "In the maintenance bay." She picks up a huge crate that looks like it weighs about two tons and stomps off. "Sorry for interrupting." It's sad, and it's a little funny, but only the latter because it's kind of scary. Like you don't cheat on She-Hulk, for she can be both Savage and Sensational.

-- Page 12 --

John makes tracks after Aeryn, begging her to slow down and talk. "What the heck's the matter with you?" (Men grant themselves this pass, but I am here to tell you: You're not crazy. He knows what the fuck is the matter with her. Don't be snowed.) Aeryn's like, "Um, oh. These two-ton boxes are very heavy and I'm going to be hefting ten more of them." She tosses her hair. "Do not come down this corridor without one." He begs her to stop and starts -- ugh -- *explaining*: "Look, what happened back there was..." And she gives the only reply that she can possibly give, which is that it was none of her business. "Yes, it was," he says, which would be enough, but this is John. He's going to screw it up. "You and I are shipmates! Haven't you ever just clicked with a guy?" She's like, "Click?" He asks if she's never found a guy attractive, and oh does she screw the pooch: "Yes, but I didn't let it...in the beginning, I found you...interesting." He's taken aback by this abrupt left turn. I don't think it's that she accidentally just stepped in a huge pile of vulnerable, I think it's because he's an idiot. Like she's up there and he's down here. You hurt more people with that kind of esteem bullshit than you will ever know. Stop being a pussy and just fucking go for it. "Yes," she nods at his dumb ass, "...but only for a moment." Heh. He's like, "Oh, good." They agree that it's good to be on "even terms," and walk away from each other: "Sometimes it's a good idea to clear the air," he says. "Mm. Very clear air," she says, from somewhere really scary. Even [Mal](#) and [Inara](#) are like, "Dude, you are killing us here. Get it together."

I have this idea that this season on [Gilmore Girls](#), Taylor and Michel should totally hook up and get married in the gazebo. How awesome would that be? They're totally the Riggs/Russo of that show! You know Sookie would go apeshit. I was going to make some lame [Clark/Lex](#) joke up there, but then I remembered my awesome plan. Speaking of people you do not want to see in the same room, much less making out, Rygel has located a corpse. "Durka," he whispers. "Is it really you, Durka?" He spots a gun in Durka's hand. "You killed yourself, Durka? You coward." If you knew what killed the *Zelbinion*, you'd probably shoot yourself just in case. I hate what killed the *Zelbinion* more than the *Zelbinion* itself. Even if what killed the *Zelbinion* brings lovely gifts with it, when it comes. "You once told me I'd never leave the *Zelbinion* alive. You robbed me of so many cycles...but no matter what you did to me, I'll always remember one thing: *You lose*." He spits another huge wad on the corpse. Zhaan is really good with these alternative therapies, I'll give her that. That's exactly what the little shit needed. Heh. "You lose." He slays me.

-- Page 13 --

Stupid froggy launches toward the *Zelbinion*, accompanied by a squadron. I can't ever hear the word "squadron" without screaming "*Alert the amphibious squadron!*" no matter where I am, because that is still the funniest fucking thing in the universe to me for some reason. I get hysterical. Sometimes I have to go lie down and not think about squadrons for awhile.

D'Argo and Pilot and Zhaan are alerted to the froggy squadron and they do a lot of worrying about the froggies getting onto either Moya or *Zelbinion*, I'm confused about that the entire episode, and meanwhile Gilina's 'babbling at John: "When I kill the bypass, these two polaric disks will be attracted to each other. Strongly. So you have to hold them apart, because if they touch each other, this whole room will be vaporized." Um, wait. My bad, that's actually not technobabble at all. That's every side of the triangle, and I'm not speaking in cutesy bullshit shipper code either: I think that's actually what the line is saying. I love this show.

I believe that stupid froggy bossman calls the squadron "scoundrel fighters." Which is moderately awesome, especially coming from a stupid dog's anus.

D'Argo and Pilot and Zhaan are alerted to the froggy squadron some more, and they do a lot of worrying about froggy getting honorable on the *Zelbinion*, and meanwhile Gilina's still explaining just how hard the panels are going to be pulling toward each other. She "kills the bypass," or whatever, and they start in, John struggling mightily. D'Argo alerts Aeryn to the squadron, specifically the stupid froggy with the honor, who is probably on the *Zelbinion* about to kill everybody. She runs in toward John and Gilina and John's like, "The hell?" Zhaan doesn't really care to explain about how their stall worked just long enough to create mutiny and honor situations: "What's important is that he might be headed right toward you!" Heh. John says they need to stop with the science, and she says that the array won't live through that. "Then *finish* the process," he growls. "I want you to get out of here." She promises she'll never leave him or whatever. I'm bored. What's Aeryn doing?

Shooting at the face of the honorable Sheyang, of course. Then he shoots fire out of that face and she ducks.

"Gilina, I want you out of here." "If you die here, John, I die too." I'm bored. What's Aeryn doing? I want to be clear that I don't think they did a bad job of making it seem



realistic that they'd like each other, or be all romantic and "if you die here" with each other. I buy it. I just don't care all that much. I love Gilina, I love John. They're great. But I get it, and somewhere on the *Zelbinion* Aeryn is shooting at shit. Shit that might blow up. It's hard to concentrate. Let's put a check mark in the "I bought the premise of the episode" box and get back to what's important: Aeryn.

-- Page 14 --

"He keeps blocking my route, forcing me to take the long way around. You many have to defend yourself!" John replies that it's a long story, but his hands are literally full right now, so she needs to get her hot ass back to the array. Where the froggy has just found John. "And make it fast. Because ugly's outside the door right now. Aeryn, get here. C'mon, Aeryn." Mostly to himself by this point. If I were Aeryn, I'd be like, "Ooooooh, I'm in trouble! My awesome girlfriend doesn't have a gun, just a screwdriver and a yearning to transgress! Whatever will I do?" And then I'd take it real damn slow. Just kidding, I would totally walk through fire for that man: "They spit fire? How come nobody tells me this stuff? How come nobody told me they spit fire?!" See? Cute. Aeryn runs all over hell and back trying to get to him; Gilina keeps working. John keeps standing there. Commercials at some point.

Froggy gets in and John totally says, "Oh, shit." He welcomes the Sheyang into the room and tells him to loot away, but if the two panels touch...FIREBALL! John dodges, nicely, but then screws it up by punning: "Listen gas-hole, you kill us, you kill yourself!" Honor Frog tells him they already had their chance to retreat. John invites him to come a little closer, and then Aeryn (a) slides down a chain from *out of the sky*, (b) with her gun pointing at the thing, (c) sticks a solid landing, (d) blows the shit out of the froggy's head, (e) stands in the middle of a flaming rain of frog parts looking gorgeous, (f) doesn't even spare a look at John or Gilina as she (g) says with a huge, cocky grin, "Sorry about the mess," and then (h) slaps another chain out of her way and takes off with just a monumental amount of spring in her step, which kills John on several levels, firstly (i) because it was fucking awesome, and secondly (j) because like all boys of his generation, he secretly kinda wants to make out with Han Solo a little bit, which I personally never understood until just this second, but (k) now he can. And he will!

D'Argo and Zhaan are not feeling John on the plan to leave Gilina at the *Zelbinion* and call Crais to return for her. John points out that they have to leave anyway, the Sheyangs are still around, and Crais is bound to show up at some point. I would also point out that, from what we've seen, Crais is crap at finding Moya. D'Argo says that they've been lucky, but this is handing Crais all the cards. "If she doesn't tell him we were here..." Zhaan interrupts John: "I'm a trusting soul at best, but not to a fault." Because God knows she's completely lacking any of *those*. Aeryn speaks up. "The tech will not reveal our presence." D'Argo asks why she thinks that, and instead of going off on some kind of soldiery thing about foxholes and the debt of life and whatever, she cuts the BS: "You know what happened to me, being deemed irreversibly contaminated by Crais. Contamination by enemy life forms. That could happen to you. The punishment is death. Or worse, banishment. I hope you can only ever imagine how horrible it is, to never return to the life that you love. You are smarter than that, Gilina." Fucking ouch already. Gilina nods: "Yes, I'm smarter than

you. And I kissed your boyfriend. But I really like you and I want to be friends, especially now that you're Han Solo. Please don't hit me anymore."

-- Page 15 --

The Sheyangs talk about how they've called for Crais's Command Carrier and it's coming back, and how the honorable one blew up like a pumpkin, and then they have a talk with D'Argo about how he was totally lying the whole time, and they thought that was awesome, because "there is no shame in losing to a clever opponent," but also, they are going to kill D'Argo one day with all the hate a frog footman with a dog's-anus face can muster. He's like, "Later!" Zhaan tells him again how magnificent he was, and D'Argo gets a little shirty: "With or without your assistance." She grins at him. "Or in spite of it."

Aeryn and Gilina are standing at the entrance to the *Zelbinion*, and Gilina's telling Aeryn she's totally going to lie right to Crais's face and it's going to be awesome. "I wish I had been so smart," says Aeryn. The word is innocence, and it's sad when you lose it, little by little. You get more beautiful and more sad. Gilina grabs Aeryn, who's busy trying to get the hell away from her before hugs break out, and they clasp hands. Aeryn graciously leaves John with Gilina.

"You free this weekend?" Gilina smiles and says she is, other than having to overhaul a Prowler engine. John says he doesn't want her to go, but he can't really ask her to stay, because life on Moya is "no way to live." And they laugh that she can't really ask him to come with her, since Crais would kill his ass. "You get any vacation time?" She sighs, realizes they'll probably never see each other again. He starts in about somehow organizing a rendezvous at some point, and D'Argo comms in that they have to leave now. John takes her to the door of the *Zelbinion*, her hand in his: "Life sucks." And if it brought them together? "Okay. It sucks a little less." He kisses her forehead.

"Crichton?" comes D'Argo's voice on comms. "Crichton?"

They part, Gilina steps through the door. It closes behind her. That was great. John comes into command and says "Hey." Aeryn looks at him: "A greeting I will never understand." He describes it as "all-purpose": "It lets the other person decide what they wanna talk about." *And if they don't want to talk?* "Then they say 'hey' back." *Hey.* This whole scene is just... "Well, then the first person who doesn't wanna talk can be trumped, if the other person realizes that they need to. Hey." They smile. "I hate being ambushed," Aeryn says. She's not talking about the Sheyang. There's the place you used to live, where you can never return. There's the place you live now. There's the man that makes it okay, and shows you why it's beautiful. That's a lot of ambushes in one day.

-- Page 16 --

He's going with option A: "You know, in my world, they say that loss is the hardest emotion to deal with." Aeryn counters: "In my world, showing pain is a sign of weakness."

Crichton: "How do you not feel pain after what you've been through?"

Aeryn: "Don't pretend to understand me, John."

(*John*, she says to him.)

"If I somehow, someday, get a chance to return to my world. Walk around my old neighborhood, see my old house. My dad's truck, best friend's bike on the lawn. And then I get a chance to go inside, walk through the living room upstairs to my room.

"And then I think, what if everyone were dead? What if all my friends and family are lying there, dead. Now, what would it be like to go home then?"

Aeryn: "I stand corrected."

I have nothing to add to that at all.

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<http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/show/farscape/thank-god-its-friday-aga...>

## - Last Tanga In The Paris Commune -

-- Page 1 --

D'Argo has gone absolutely nuts. John's actually hiding up in the ceiling as D'Argo stomps and shouts and acts crazy, hunting him. He *punches* a *DRD* in the *face*, that's how mad he is, and the camera goes staticky for a sec. So, like, John and D's little "I'm so horny!" "God, me too!" "Let's be best friends!" "Yes, because we are so horny!" thing last week, I guess that really worked out all the issues. Or started new ones.

Three days later. Aeryn, John, Rygel, and Zhaan are all klatched around the table in command, watching a tiny little recorded hologram D'Argo run around the ship shouting for John's blood. Man, this is a good beginning to a very variable episode. Rygel: "You're dead!" John marvels about how D'Argo's been like this for three whole days. "He still can't be freaking like that." Aeryn explains to us that we're seeing "Luxan hyper-rage -- it doesn't just go away." Zhaan congratulates John for hiding as well as he did, and Aeryn notes that they looked for him for three days to tell him D'Argo was off the ship. "You hide very well. You must have had a lot of practice." Rygel laughs at this, and John tells him to cram it. "It comes natural, especially when you got *that* chasing you." His accent, even after three days, signals major wiggled. "Why the hell is he raging after me, anyway?" Zhaan explains that it's because John is another male, and John asks why, then, he wasn't going after Rygel. "Spanky here is male [*happy grunt*]...I think [*sad grunt*]." Rygel harrumphs and says D'Argo knows better than to fuck with him. Aeryn tells John that D'Argo took her Prowler down to a planet, and Zhaan hopes "the rage has had time to dissipate." "Or" -- and I think that John's got his finger on this better than she -- "he's killed something." Rygel smiles gleefully at the thought.

As hilarious as gay panic is, I think this has more to do with seeing that pseudo-Luxan (and that pseudo-pseudo-Luxan) last week. I think it's analogous to the discomfort Aeryn feels about Urp -- almost right, not exactly right, you're maybe willing to split the difference, and then it turns on you, horribly. Bites you hard. For somebody who is a born warrior, a pack hunter, to be exiled from not one, but two races, and then spend a bunch of time in jail, and finally brush up against a jacked-up kind of fulfillment -- only to have it taken away viciously again -- that's gotta hurt. And John kind of stuck his face on that loneliness last week. I wonder if Scovians look like Sebaceans. I bet they do. Or maybe this is just to make up for the fact that the women got all bitchy last week -- it's the other side of that "girls only fight over men" coin, and if anything it's

more damaging, this idea that sometimes men just get violent and sometimes men just want a beer and a blow job or they might get violent.

-- Page 2 --

Aeryn heads out on a transport pod and lands on a dark planet, looking for D'Argo. For some reason she has brought John, along with Zhaan and Rygel. Poor John, as usual he's the worst bet, due to D'Argo wanting to eat his lunch. All the people are wearing red, mostly knit fabrics, and they have white hair and they are ruddy and dirty and they have creepy pale eyes. They look like [Fremen](#), and that is really not a compliment. They have their stupid hair all in crazy ways, including sticking up out of their stupid headbands, and the first thing I think of is [Big Brother 3006](#) when we're all food for Morlocks, and then the second thing I think of is Burning Man, and I realize we're already there. [Biceland](#). The people are uniformly gross and stupid-looking and they all have pothead smiles and they all sell t-shirts and sell furniture on the side of the road for an older, grosser hippie that can't even make change because he's so burned out. It's a good thing I like this episode or I would be very cross just based on looking at these bastards. John makes some reference nobody gets (*Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*, which...those movies look very different to me right this second), as usual, and then doesn't bother to explain it at all, as usual, and talks shit about *Thunderdome* in the process, for which he will soon answer to Master Blaster, because that movie rocks.

(You know what else looks really different to me right now? The Peacekeepers. They've chosen for themselves the moral authority to police the galaxy, and whenever anybody makes the mistake of complaining they can say, "You asked for it," they're just Keeping the Peace, and meanwhile they're self- and double- and triple-dealing and committing atrocities everywhere you look, because money talks and the armed forces don't recruit the best people, because the military has always been a really efficient machine for killing poor people. And nobody's morality is really all that impeccable in this world, at least not in a way you can centralize, so the insane commanders just roam all over the place with their insane agendas and insane amounts of power, and nobody actually knows who's in charge, because it's all...well, this is just a TV show so I guess fascism for its own sake is enough. You don't really need oil money or straw-man abuse of religion for that to play, in the context of the show. But remember Lynndie England, with her 80 IQ? Remember how they threw her white-trash ass to the dogs? Although it's funny you should bring up oil money, Dick, considering where this episode ends up. This episode aired April 23, 1999. Back then the Peacekeepers were an ideological metaphor. If you'd told me in 1999 we'd all be living there in 2006, I would have punched your face because I loved my country and the really fucking hilarious part is that I still do.)

-- Page 3 --

Zhaan asks Aeryn if she'll be okay in the heat, due to the delirium factor, and she says she'll be okay as long as it's nighttime. Rygel points out how it's fairly bright outside, and John spares a second to explain the planetary concept of white night, which translates here as an infinite workweek. Rygel calls the phenomenon "find the Luxan and save ourselves from heat seizure," instead, and they halt outside a rockin' bar. "Shall we?" says Zhaan drolly.

Inside the bar there is not-entirely-horrible drummy dance playing, and everywhere there are horrible hippies dancing stupidly. John's like, "Sebaceans, right?" Aeryn snorts, disgusted -- I feel you, girl -- and tells him they're just "common laborers," a "distant cousin species, at best," and notice how we're still not going to the Marx place there, and John calls them "kissing cousins, just like humans and Sebaceans," which is hilarious because of last week, and the whole kissin' cousins issue there. I doubt this is on purpose, but I do like that we're getting another offshoot so early in the game. Maybe next week there will be people just like Zhaan, only...*green!* Aeryn chuckles at the concept of human-Sebacean links, saying that *the day they prove that* is the day she'll "let Palmolian meat hounds tear all the flesh" from her bones. I, of course, assumed immediately that somehow John and Aeryn would be making out by Act Three. And then the dogs would come, I guess.

John sees D'Argo across the bar and takes off like a shot, but D'Argo chases him down and tosses him onto a couch and jumps on top of him. John squeals and smacks D'Argo a couple of times, but D'Argo just laughs and gets closer and closer to his face...but then he giggles and squeezes John really hard -- "Is this the end of hyper-rage? I get hugged to death?" -- and tells him how great it is to see him.

Credits, during which probably they make out. Come on. Just a little?

Everybody is sitting at the bar and the music is still going on, and the very giggly and weird D'Argo is walking Rygel through apparently his first chug. Aeryn watches D'Argo and the look on her face is really complicated. She's a soldier, a warrior, like him.

That's their thing that they have in common. That and John. So imagine she's about to either puke or burst into tears for the rest of this whole scene, and you'll have the right image: "D'Argo, you've been laboring." He has. "What is wrong with you?" "Nothing," he says. "Everything is right! Everything's very right." Across the bar there is a totally grotsky lady staring him down with her shiny teeth and creepy eyes. Rygel asks -- almost off-hand -- if he killed anybody, with the hyper-rage. "No, that is all gone. Now there is just...contentment." Aeryn now adds "terrified" to the previous list of "barfy" and "sad," and smacks the hell out of him. "*You are a warrior. Act like one.*" D'Argo claims he is not, in fact, a warrior, and points out that, technically, he's been a prisoner and a fugitive longer than he ever was a warrior. "Don't you feel it's time I stopped lying to myself about who I really am? Here, my efforts have purpose." And, like, that's a way better point in this episode than the undergrad political stuff: the confusion of what we *are* with what we *do*. There's at least one scene in each act in which they directly talk about how D'Argo has absolutely no plan for his life and no career to speak of, no army since the Ilanic approximation didn't work out. How he has no family; how if he's nothing, that means he can be anything, which is terrifying...and then there's Aeryn, looking like she might kill him. If she can stop shaking.

-- Page 4 --

"Purpose?" asks John, but the grotsky chick grabs D'Argo and they run off. John wows about "My boy D'Argo, into the Promised Land," and Aeryn's still grossed out. "Yes, and he's left his brain behind." Which is admittedly the other part of this, because it's as much Aeryn's episode as D'Argo's: if you're not a warrior, with a warrior's mind, what are you?

A skinny albino lady with pretty features but intense red eyes and gray veins all over and white woolen extensions comes tottering up, looking crazy, with some

bodyguards that she leaves behind. She's wearing all white (the hippies are wearing all red, Aeryn's wearing all black). The visual here is that the people are ruddy because they work all day in the fields, while she stays creepy-lily white indoors like a fat hive queen, and that's how you know what the deal is. Her name is Volmae, and Zhaan greets her warmly, and formally, touching her hands and doing mysterious Delvian gestures. "Greetings. I am Pa'u Zotoh Zhaan. This is John Crichton" -- John gives her a peace sign, in keeping with their hellish environment -- "Aeryn Sun. And his eminence, Dominar Rygel the XVI." She talks like she's having a stroke right this second, the entire episode, but unlike last week, it is not horribly annoying, because she's *actually ambiguous*, whereas last week, Matala was obviously evil before she'd even docked her shuttle. She says it's a pleasure to welcome them to Sykar, which is the planet of course, and calls herself their leader, "as much as anyone is our leader." Hippies! Run! She says D's been talking about the *Moya* crew, and Zhaan's like, "In that he probably told you we are not staying here for more than one hot second and that we're harmless, right?" Volmae's all, "Basically, but like just feel some vibes and get groovy and do whatever."

She takes off and Aeryn says, clearly and loudly, "She gives me a woody." Zhaan gives her a quizzical look, John gives her a bemused and kind of horrified one. "A woody. A human saying, I've heard you say it often: when you don't trust someone, or they make you nervous, they give you --" And John interrupts her, loving it: "*Willies*. She gives you the *willies*." He's insistent on this point but still kind of mind-blown about the conversation. An indecipherable announcement that doesn't actually matter comes over the PA, and they all scatter. John says that only a "simple people" would've managed not to invent last call.

Outside the bar, the announcements are still going on. You can hear bits and parts but it's all like, "Working is awesome and tomorrow is Saturday and Rupert Murdoch loves you and Ignorance is Strength and Bah-Dah-Bah-Bah-*Bah* I'm Loving It" and the like. Aeryn checks out Rygel, who's in distress. What kind? *Digestive*, of course. He takes off, belching. Aeryn sees D'Argo wandering in the throng of gross hippies and catches up to him. "You're staying the night! Excellent. Tomorrow is a rest day -- I'll be able to show you all the wonders of this planet," he sing-songs at her, carelessly, and then disappears with the gross chick.

-- Page 5 --

Behind them, nearer the bar, another gross native with hair sticking out all over grabs John and slams him into the wall, whispering close: "Listen to me. No matter what happens, no matter what you hear, you must stay." She scoots just in time for Aeryn to come find John, and of course she ignores him talking about how he just got manhandled. Her face is very spare, still. "I just spoke to D'Argo. He says he's content. He wants to stay, so I say we leave him. And we go." John takes a second to register this and then stutters, reminding her of how it's clear that "Woodstock" has done something to D'Argo's head. Somewhere else, there are explosions and screaming Rygel, and Zhaan joins them as they run toward the sound. There's a joke about Tim Leary and Mrs. O'Leary's cow here but I can't come up with it, so here's the runner-up. The PA's all, "Noam Chomsky will be speaking in the Commons area in twenty minutes" or whatever, so everybody heads over that way.



Rygel, on his Jazzy, is hovering around some kind of tumbledown architecture -- the whole city is kind of bombed-out looking -- and there's fire flashing all over, and he's shrieking. Rygel cries out to John and the others that "the assassins, the bastards" are trying to kill him. John asks what the hell happened, and Rygel tells him there was a bomb very close to where he was..."hovering." Heh. John pushes, and Rygel admits he was relieving himself. Aeryn climbs up next to Rygel as he whines and gibbers. "...One minute, and the next? Bomb! I suffered many assassination attempts on Hyneria..." Aeryn interrupts and asks him why: "Nobody knows you here. It's only the people who know you who want to kill you." Also funny. This episode is funny. Zhaan murmurs to John that the sun'll be up soon, that the heat's going to get "very intense." John shouts up to Aeryn, and she swats absentmindedly at Rygel and tells them she'll take Rygel back to Moya. "Come on, Your Eminence." There's something missing from her face; everything she says is kind of disaffected. You can trace a line here from Matala, bringing up D'Argo's hopes and crushing them, to watching him self-destruct and have a pot-head existential crisis in the middle of his hyper-range crisis, and across to Aeryn, seeing that's how it looks from the outside. Rygel whines, and she reminds John: "We agreed: no lingering. I'm coming back, and we're getting out of here. With or without D'Argo."

John and Zhaan knock on the door of D'Argo's apartment, and he answers in...is that a fucking *cardigan*? No, it's a robe. Damn. He giggles and wiggles and acts stoned and they chat for a sec before he invites them into the apartment: "It is provided." Zhaan tries to level -- "Something isn't quite right about this place, and it is affecting you" -- and John tries to back her up, asking D'Argo to come home with them. Before he can even bring up how expensive deprogrammers are, D'Argo pulls out a Murphy bed: "You are both welcome to stay as long as you want." It flops to the floor. John tries to continue the conversation, but D'Argo cuts him off with a languid "Tomorrow," and heads into his bedroom, where a horrible hippie with an admittedly amazing body is doing something very bendy. He grins at us and closes the doors; Zhaan and John agree that probably they're going to have to wait awhile, and negotiate their sleeping arrangements. [Sex! That's so how they get you!](#) Freshman year, remember? Along with drugs! And folk music! And collective ownership of the means of production!

-- Page 6 --

Aeryn and Pilot are wiggling out because there are now explosions happening on Moya. Somewhere. Aeryn runs all over the place and Rygel screams for help and Aeryn and Pilot have a little meeting about how it's coming from Rygel's quarters. She enters and Rygel's in the corner shrieking and scared and shooting fire out of...somewhere. I cannot handle seeing Rygel's penis right now, or ever, so again my respect for Officer Sun grows. She creeps close and tells him to hold still. Hilariously and dead-seriously. Claudia Black, and I totally mean this as a compliment no matter how it sounds, has really good chemistry with Muppets. She scrapes some mucus off his Muppet face and flings it; it explodes. Rygel's motherfucking functions. From one crotch to another. In the Murphy bed, Zhaan rolls over in her sleep and her hand lands slap-bang on John's batch. He gingerly lifts it off. Anybody else, I'd call bullshit, because it's John, but Zhaan's fully hot in her own right, bald and blue or not, and would probably think of it as chimp sex anyhow. Aeryn calls John on comms, and he cutely climbs over Zhaan and whispers, like somehow Aeryn will see him in bed

with Zhaan through the phone. She tells him there's a "situation" on Moya, and he says it could not possibly be "any more interesting" than the one down on the planet. "Well," she says archly, "remember Rygel's assassination attempt? He caused it himself. His body fluids have turned explosive." John stands corrected. Rygel whines at Aeryn, who *whips* around and points at him, awesomely. "You want to live?" She tells him that he needs to calm down or else his sweat is going to blow him up. John calmly tells her to run some tests. "Use the scanner thing in the maintenance bay." She shakes her head, scared all over again. "No. I am not the scientist." This is the first time you see how the war v. science thing plays out for Aeryn: it's more intense for her than anybody. Sebaceans have a class system; she's not a tech, she's infantry. We've talked about it before, but this is the first time you see how deep it goes. "I know that. Look, just have Pilot help you." He tells her to isolate Rygel, "no fluids, no food" -- which earns the expected groan, which earns in turn another hilarious hardcore look from Aeryn. John tells her to call back when she's got some results, and they'll figure it out.

"Good morning, citizens. A new day begins. Remember, rejoice in your work and keep feeding those 'personal accounts,' because after all, Social Security is in jeopardy..."

-- Page 7 --

Zhaan and John are spooned in the Murphy bed; John's hand is totally cupping her ass over the sheet. She wakes and smiles sleepily, "Good morning, John." He retracts his hand with a quickness and rolls away as D'Argo comes into the room. John starts in on him again, but D'Argo tells him he's going to be late for work. "I thought today was a rest day?" D'Argo corrects him lovingly: "No no no, today is the last day of the work cycle! Tonight there is going to be a great big celebration." The hooch comes out and her intense abs fill the screen; she hugs D'Argo goodbye and they leave, D'Argo with promises of meeting up later and then some wolfish growls in the direction of the hooch.

A bunch of disgusting hippies are lining up for work in the street. Following D'Argo, John and Zhaan join the procession. "Good morning, citizens. A new day begins. Remember, rejoice in your work and you will be rewarded. Be temperate. Be strong and healthful. Keep production line flowing. Efficiency in your task will be observed and noted. Your reward status can therefore be improved. Keep your mind on your task. Free yourself from all concerns. Focus only on the task. Be content. Be strong. Keep production lines flowing. Nick Lachey and Jessica Simpson are well on their way to reconciliation. Anne Coulter is just a crazy nutcase and nobody important buys her best-selling books. Nicole Richie is much prettier, now that she weighs seventy pounds..."

Out in the fields, John sees a chick that's been staring him down -- and who smashed his face into a wall yesterday -- and follows her to a boxcar a few hundred yards from the work group. "You seem interested in me. What do you say we talk?" She says okay, and then a dude grabs John from behind and pulls him inside the boxcar. They hold him down inside, and one of them drops a creepy fat white worm on John, and it crawls inside his bellybutton. Ugh. Exploding piss *oui*! Bloated worms in the bellybutton *non*! The worm-wrangler, Hybin, tells him seriously and not unkindly: "Listen, you must tell no one of this. If they know you carry the worm, they will kill you for it. Eat and the pain will go away. Do you understand? You must eat." The boxcar

starts to move, and the revolutionaries bounce. John writhes and moans and feels horrible.

Commercial break/lacuna: "Ashlee Simpson had a nose job. Kate Moss: it's like the whole thing never happened! JonBenet Ramsey is kiddie-porn snuff the whole family can enjoy. Please stop picking on Wal-Mart..."

-- Page 8 --

John stumbles out of the boxcar, and you know, the great thing about John Crichton is he looks smokin' hot even when he's sweating and retching and hallucinating and rolling around, and the good thing about that is that that's what he's doing. He grabs some tannot root, which is the thing that they're all harvesting, and it's cool because the PA talks over the whole scene, framing it beautifully: "Be strong. Free yourself of all concerns. Be strong. Eat the tannot root. Be strong. Our way of life..." He considers the root and takes a bite, chewing madly. "Rejoice in your work. The guards are your protectors. Free yourself of all concerns. Trust them..."

I've completely lost track of what's being satirized here. I guess cults. I guess any time you realize you're fallible, and you stop voting for yourself and decide to put that power and trust in somebody *else* who's fallible -- because they automatically are, because that's part of the definition of being a person -- you are an idiot. An idiot in a cult. And worse, you're weak.

D'Argo and Zhaan are in the field, farming the tannot. They are both fucking awesome in this scene, just impeccable. Especially weird if you think about filming this scene over and over, in a field, with effed-up contacts in and/or a four-hour prosthetic face. Zhaan tries to get D'Argo to admit that a man as young as he shouldn't be committing to something like this all crazily, and he counters nicely: "Do you want to spend the rest of your days on the run?" She dodges this by talking about herself. "I know such decisions can come upon one quickly. My choice to join the Delvian Seek -- to become a priest -- occurred in the matter of a blink of an eye. One moment, I was lying in my cell, a savage capable of anything. The next, the truth was revealed to me, and I knew my true path." She is so heartbreaking: she's trying to elicit sympathy and deprogram him by...admitting that she's in the exact same boat, living a made-up spiritual fantasy that does nothing but cover up the emptiness of truth. So she gets to condescend slightly, because of course, *he's* completely wrong, and on the wrong path, while when *she* sat in that cell and thought herself to holiness, that was the right call, not a cult of one, and nobody can question her about that, ever. Hooray for sudden epiphanies that wipe out your whole history! D'Argo agrees that it's possible, considering that's like exactly what happened here with him. Zhaan begins digging alongside him and chuckles languidly. "This feels very..." *Satisfying?* "Yes! It does! Let me help you..."

-- Page 9 --

Aeryn stares at Rygel, who seems to be frozen in some kind of apparatus, and also wearing a diaper. She asks if he's for sure still alive, and Pilot snits that he's in "cryostasis" and that he "should be fine." Aeryn snaps off a little bit of Rygel's moustache, and Pilot clears his throat and "strongly suggests" she keep her hands off "any of his other protuberances." Um. Okay? But that's getting too close to the tech fear, this tiny moustache fuckup, so she tells him to do it himself and she'll just take off. Pilot explains that the scanner is ancillary to *Moya's* systems and he can't access

it, and Aeryn offers to move the clamshell for him. So much fear, such deft denial, and for what? Because all this "you could be more" is nice in theory, but even something as small as this, to someone as rigid as Aeryn, is a jump off a cliff into nothing. No, it's tech stuff: it's off the cliff and into garbage. "Please, Officer Sun. I will instruct you through the process."

John is convulsing and wiggling around sickly in the Murphy bed when D'Argo and Zhaan get home from work. D'Argo hails him in that creepy, joyful voice, and Zhaan pulls up a chair. John says he's happy to see her, and admits that he's been barfing all day. She interrupts him to say that she is sorry he wasn't out in the fields with them. "D'Argo was right, it's an absolutely wonderful place." The sickness of the worm turns into sickness of his friends joining cults: "Not you, too?" It's not played for laughs, it's very awesomely played very hardcore here. *Fucking seriously?* The accent comes in: "No *damn* way. You're not going to do this to me." She smiles and deflects, he begs and shivers. He points to her hands, and she grins. "The dirt and grime of an honest day's labor, John. It feels so good." D'Argo brings her some hippie clothes, and they mutter to each other about how comfortable these new hippie clothes are going to be. As opposed to her usual confining and uncomfortable garments? "This diaphanous potato sack dress is *soooo* much more flowing and relaxing than the identical diaphanous potato sack dress I was wearing before!" John continues to beg Zhaan for help, and comes close to admitting the whole worm issue -- which, you remember, will get him killed -- until D'Argo comes back out with another set of clothes, and then just drops it. Both of them staring at him, so happy. It's rough. Why does D'Argo have women's apparel and men's clothes in various sizes? Why? "It is provided," I guess. John takes the clothes and they head out for the celebration. "It's a rest day tomorrow!"

-- Page 10 --

I don't agree with their stupid hair care, I don't agree with their stupid lifestyle, and I really don't agree with their stupid, awful dancing. However, I cannot say that I disagree entirely with their stupid hippie clothing, provided that it is John Crichton wearing the hippie clothing. He's wearing a red quilted vest over a sleeveless russet tunic, and some drawstring pants. I guess this is when wardrobe finally decided on the arms for good, and we thank them for it. And in this outfit he is walking, with drums almost too loud for conversation -- like these freaks have those -- through the bar again. The aggressive revolutionary chick, Tanga, once more grabs him from behind and pokes him with something sharp as she's saying a pleasant hello. "Come, join us for a drink!"

Tanga and John join her dad, Hybin, and another dude at the bar, where she begs her slumping father to sit up straight. John starts yelling about the worm, and Hybin patiently explains that it's the worm keeping him safe. "Without it, you would already be like them." John asks for some exposition, which is considerate of him, and Hybin obliges: the worm thrives on the toxin in the tannot. John *finally* figures out that the people are all wacky and stupid because of the food that they've been plainly handing out and ordering everybody to eat the entire time. Tanga tells him to pass and act like an idiot. Which...it's the low-key part that he'll be finding difficult. He's kind of jumpy, John Crichton. "If they discover you are immune, they will execute you." Wow. John asks if they've all been wormed, and Hybin says that they're just naturally immune to

the tannot drug for whatever reason -- like, he doesn't even try to explain that part -- and again tells John they need his specific help, for some reason. They did not do their homework!

Hybin and the guy take off, and Tanga bounces after hissing again about how he's going to die if he doesn't act stoned all the time. The reason for their hasty retreat is Volmae, turns out, who admires his clothes while talking like a freak. He's like, "Thank you...these clothes are wonderful. They're just...wonderful." Hey, man: nice shot. Volmae asks if he's enjoying his drugged food and he continues to do a poor job acting stoned, and she asks about Rygel and Aeryn. John's like, "I will totally make them come back down here because they deserve bean bag chair time too and I feel great and really content and not at all alert. They should totally drop acting of their own volition like immediately, dude." She says that D told her about *Moya* being a cargo vessel, and acts very sketchy about that, and then together they intone once more that tomorrow is a rest day. John's grossed out as he says it with her.

-- Page 11 --

Up on *Moya*, Aeryn is having a panic attack about beginning the tests. And by "panic attack," I don't mean to imply that she's shaking or hyperventilating; she's Aeryn Sun and she's having an Aeryn Sun panic attack, which looks like when a mule digs into the dirt and tells you to go suck a tannot. Pilot's like, "You were doing great!" and Aeryn tells him that the problem is that science is very boring. "Sometimes science is," he says wonderfully, "but Dominar Rygel's life depends on our finding the cause of this phenomenon, and rectifying it if we can." Aeryn bitches and says that Pilot doesn't get it because "all this analysis dren" comes so easily to him, and Pilot fills her in on how it's actually really hard for him to do complex science stuff. "When a pilot is bonded to a leviathan -- as I am bonded to *Moya* -- it is as a navigator, a monitor of all the living ship's functions. The analysis of scientific data is not something I know or easily understand." Aeryn cocks her head, really not getting it: "Yeah, but...you're *good* at it." Pilot tries to explain that hard work on things that are difficult is its own reward, and she tries to understand this concept. Immediately, she's like, "Does everybody know that you have to study things?" And he asks her to keep that a secret. So awesome. Body and mind. There's not a pool hall shark that got good by learning physics, and they're both pool hall sharks trying to explain physics to themselves.

Without going into it in an irritating depth, the mind is built around the things you're conscious of and the things you aren't. Together, that's everything that there is; Jung calls it the Self but it's basic to most psychological systems, and here it's called *Moya*. And there are doors between where you're used to standing (ego, John), between the conscious and the unconscious mind (the id, Rygel; the shadow, D'Argo now, Scorpius later), and there are doors between where you're standing and the whole Self (the anima, Aeryn; dreams and the religious experience, Zhaan; and what's called the Ego-Self Axis, which is Pilot). Note how Zhaan and Aeryn's interactions are characterized by (a) not a lot of talking, and (b) talking completely over John's head in a language he doesn't understand. Note how Zhaan's connection to *Moya* is *always* sensual, not verbal. Note how Zhaan's true connection to Aeryn, when that connection matters most, takes place in the realm of dreams and the underworld. Point being, Aeryn and Pilot will always have this siblinghood because they comprise the two most

powerful connections John has to the Self, which is literally everything -- and that this first break into their (emphatically central) relationship is made up of their shared inability to process John's verbal, scientific, logical, phallic skills. That's a big piece of tannot to swallow and I don't really have an excuse this week except for this scene; to say, watch how it moves and changes, as we proceed. In two episodes, and again next season with Talyn, Aeryn will come up against precisely this brick wall, turning the intuitive skills she has into the analytic "tech" skills that offend her most. In this way she becomes more like John, rising up to consciousness, and in this way she becomes more. War edging toward science, body toward mind. And if you reverse the flow, you're talking about John and wormholes: turning his science into magic and warrior's intuition, becoming more like her; in this way he becomes more. So much beautifully more.

-- Page 12 --

Done. Ooh! Look at John looking all sexy with the vest! The PA's going ("Stop reading so much into this stupid science fiction show and start cracking some jokes I've heard before in other hilarious contexts! Write some hate mail and make sure to misspell the word 'pretentious'! Ignorance is strength!") and we transition to John wearing a funny hat, digging with Zhaan and D'Argo.

Aeryn has finished, she thinks. Pilot is similarly ambivalent about whether they've done good science. "No...well, I can prep another slide of Rygel's blood and check his liver and altex functions again," says Aeryn, causing half the audience to fall over sideways and break into a cold sweat. "No need," says Pilot sweetly. "So, what are you saying? That it's done? That I did it?" She did. Aeryn immediately demurs and is all, "Oh, Pilot it was all you, all I did was wear a sparkly dress and turn the letters over as they lit up," and Pilot underscores pretty huffy-awesomely that it was all her. "Huh. It was me." Dust your TV screen before you kiss it, even with modest mouth closed, or you will experience a horrible taste sensation. FYI.

John carries a sack of tannot to the boxcar, and Aeryn rings in on comms. He leans against the wall and covers his badge with his hat. "Listen, I've worked out what's wrong with Rygel. A reaction to food." John puts together that it was a reaction to the tannot, and Aeryn stumbles through some science talk as John grins. "His Hynerian body chemistry acted like a...um...a catalyst. I've set up a leaching sieve. We're collecting all the volatile elements. We're just going to flush them straight out the airlock." He congratulates her lovingly, and it's been looked at too hard, her pride in doing something shameful and John's encouragement, so she looks away. "Listen, what's happening with D'Argo? Is he coming back or not?" John says it's unlikely at this time, and she declares again her desire to leave D'Argo behind. Keep running. John is, of course, horrified, and begs her to drop that idea. "It's gotten complicated." Tanga comes near and he shuts it down. "If I haven't come up with a solution by then, then you and I may have to leave on our own." Aeryn asks about Zhaan, and gets worried about the situation planetside. "Just fix Rygel. I'll be in touch." Aeryn sighs, frustrated, left hanging with the pride of what she knows and the fear of what she doesn't.

John tips his hat down over his face and helps Tanga up into the boxcar, loading her tannot sack for her. He takes off the hat, asking if she remembers all the hitting of him she's been doing, and drags her into the boxcar. "You going to scream? Call attention



to us? Yeah? Well, go ahead." She reminds him that she's expected outside, working, and John gets intense on her: "Not before you tell me something. I want to know something right now. How do I get this worm out of me?" No answer. He asks her, frustrated and crazy, why they grow the horrible tannot in the first place; Tanga only knows it was brought to the planet by some mysterious "others." It made everybody stupid, and now once every six months the bad guys come and pick up all the harvest. Volmae was chosen at random -- "could have been any one of us" -- and given the worm, which is very rare and valuable. So why waste one on John? "You have a ship. You can find someone out there who can help us. Bring us weapons. Fight beside us." She implies that the tannot is destroying the planet's ecology and that it won't last much longer -- and then they are done for. Another immune Sykaran comes to retrieve Tanga, telling her that her father is ill, out in the fields. John follows them at a distance; Tanga tries to help her father but he says he's out of energy. "Please, just let them discover me. I would rather be dead." Ouch. And the work day is complete.

-- Page 13 --

The bar, more music, more horrible dancing. Volmae interrupts Crichton -- dancing like an absolute idiot -- to ask him for a confab. They head into a warehouse, and before the door even opens, you can see Peacekeeper logos all over the place. "Would the cargo hold of your ship accommodate a significant portion of what you see here?" She indicates the crates of tannot all over the warehouse, and he admits *Moya* wouldn't hold the whole harvest. "I don't need it all," she says. She's very good in this scene, staying creepy as hell and giving the constant impression that he's about to get killed and/or that she's going to take *Moya* by force, but also seeming somewhat sympathetic. Which is a tough acting job, all of this at once, but can only be close to impossible when you're talking like you're about to have a seizure in white dreads and red contacts. "What do they do with all of this?" she muses. "If it has value to them, it must have value elsewhere." Volmae is now seeking ownership of the production itself. "You will bring the other two from your ship back down here immediately." He agrees, because he's fake-stoned, and Volmae leads him back to the celebration. John whispers, scared and grossed out, "Peacekeeper," and follows her.

Rygel, unthawed, is shivering and bitching a whole lot. Which Aeryn is not feeling: "I did the best that I could! It wasn't in my training, you know," she says proudly. Rygel points out that "Peacekeeper training" amounts to Advanced Killing with Nastiness Workshop, and Aeryn says that it's even more interesting, then, that a Peacekeeper just saved his life. He nods, and thinks, and then asks what the hell John wants with both of them coming back down planetside. "Well, can you understand Crichton?" Rygel grumbles. Actually, they kind of both do.

Aeryn grabs John outside in the destroyed main street, and he jumps. "Damn! Why can't you come in the front like regular people?" That's funny. She notes that he looks "terrible," and asks what the problem is. He says he feels worse than he looks, and asks after Rygel. Rygel is hiding in the transport pod, because this planet sucks. Some stoners walk by and John tells her to smile -- "That's what they do around here" -- as they continue to plot. She asks what he's on about and he gets pissy, so she says she's not following orders until he clears up what's going on. Instead of doing so, he whines some more, so she asks where Zhaan is, and he admits that she's with D'Argo, "dancing with the Grateful Dead." She shakes her head and suggests that

they grab both of them and run. "We can't do that, okay? Not unless Volmae orders it, and Volmae's got plans of her own." He tells her about Volmae's plan to jam *Moya* with a bunch of tannot, and Aeryn's awesomely not having that: "I don't think so." John's like, "Okay, we're briefed, let's do some kind of plan," but Aeryn still wants some details, like what's going on. "Aeryn, it's complicated."

-- Page 14 --

Aeryn's all, "'Complicated' as in 'I am too stupid'?" Interesting how this would never have occurred to her until today. "No! You know what? I did not say that." He then whines at length about how he's been out in the sun all day, picking up "magic turnips," and he has a worm crawling around in his guts and he's very put out, in general, so could she just shut up and help? (a) Do not tell Aeryn Sun to shut up or you will get what you're asking for, but also (b) could you not just lay out a præcis on this for her? Is it really important to play the obscurity angle again? I don't know why he's being dense about this, and I've been thinking about it for a while. "Help? What do you think I've been doing up there in the ship -- playing games with Rygel?" John scoffs that it's just soooo terrible up on *Moya*, where there is no destroyed planet with no sundown and no winter and magic turnips and no worms in the guts, and she goes off very wonderfully on him, taking a break halfway through to "smile," as a hippie walks by. The cool thing about the "smile" is that it is a rictus so hideous and terrifying in the middle of her lovely face that is the funniest thing in the whole episode.

"Difficult? I had to stop him from blowing himself up into bits. I had to figure out what was causing the problem and I had to fix it." John pointlessly compares her to Madame Curie, and at least this time he explains the reference: "A scientist." Oops. Aeryn's like, I'm *totally different* from Madame Curie? "What I had to do up there was like a field strategy exercise, only the enemy wasn't trying to kill me, the enemy was a puzzle, and there were lots of different pieces and independently, separately, they didn't make any sense, and I had to think it through really hard, and I had to work it out and try different combinations of putting things together and then finally I worked out what had happened, and I worked out what I had to do." That is like, top-ten one of my favorite things in this entire show. I always forget it because this episode is wedged between something horrible last week, and then next week starts the slide into the truly moving and painful. John laughs exactly as loudly, and as lovingly, as you did. She is just the most wonderful thing. "This is great. You're trading in your pulse rifle for the junior chemistry kit." She looks at him archly but answers pragmatically: "Well, my pulse rifle wasn't any *use* to me this time." He says that might not be true too much longer, and they head out.

-- Page 15 --

John now becomes totally rockin' awesome and the episode ends really quickly without a lot of "sub" in the text. And if you're bothered by the quickness of this resolution, you need to get right with the proletariat, because those bitches can turn on a dime. He's sitting on the bar watching the awful dancing when Volmae comes up and tells him to quick like a bunny fetch Aeryn and Rygel so she can have the whole family. "Don't think so. I think I'd rather have you step outside, princess." She goes from seeming seizure to actual seizure. "I *order* you to bring them here." John signals Aeryn on comms, and the music abruptly stops. John walks out, and behind him in the silence, Volmae angrily orders the musicians to continue. When you actually have to

tell the drum circle to stop fucking around and get to drumming, I bet that's, like, so weird.

Outside, John and Aeryn are booking it to that beam where Rygel gave himself his first assassination attempt. Volmae follows, with a crowd of useful idiots who don't actually know what's going on or anything. "I heard Dane Cook was coming." John requests his friends back, and Volmae fronts about "How dare you make demands?" He calls her "Snow White" and reveals the obvious fact that he is immune to the tannot. Zhaan's confused about what John's up to; Aeryn locks and loads. D'Argo protests that he's really happy at Burning Man and he will not let John destroy the futile, brainless contentment he has found. "If necessary, I will destroy you first." John signals Rygel, who gets pee-shy up on the ledge, giving D'Argo time to grab Aeryn's gun and Volmae to order ... somebody ... to grab John and Aeryn. I don't know who she's talking to; neither do they. Every hippie stares stupidly at every other hippie, like they can't remember if Dave Matthews already did the second encore and they should just stop clapping or what.

Rygel pisses directly at D'Argo and everything explodes. Everybody falls back and pouts about the buzzkill of explosive urine. John thanks Rygel sweetly and explains that the "demonstration" was, in fact, fueled by the tannot. "The ones who collect the tannot, they use it to fuel that pulse rifle, there." D'Argo's like, "They're Peacekeepers?" Volmae is horrified, and I think she's sincere: "No! They say they only use it for food!" John asks D'Argo how far you can trust a Peacekeeper, and continues explaining the science Aeryn figured out: "When the tannot is processed and mixed with the right chemicals, like it is in Rygel's stomach," he begins, and Aeryn proudly finishes his sentence: "...It makes chakan oil. Do you understand what that means? It fuels all Peacekeeper weapons." John points out that being a peace-loving bunch of retards is awesome, but they're contributing to the killing and subjugation of entire systems by the Peacekeepers. "They use it to imprison and to enslave," he says.

-- Page 16 --

("But also for freedom! The French and UN are stupid bastards! And gay! And they want to get married! It's your duty to buy an SUV and demonstrate both your capital and your ability to consume oil! Get really angry when you read something with a perceived liberal bias, because obviously it's meant to taunt and enrage -- nobody honestly believes that shit! Everywhere you turn they're shoving it down your throat, and you have no option of considering it rationally and deciding what you believe on your own terms, because you mustn't think for yourself EVER! Tannot root, the pause that refreshes!" says the PA.)

Volmae's like, "Food, weapons, it doesn't matter. Our planet is already dying." John's like, okay, buck-passer, "but your people are enslaved by *you*. You think when this planet is dead that somehow you're going to escape? That you're going to outrun the Peacekeepers?" D'Argo tells her how unlikely it is that she will be outrunning or outfighting the PKs, and Aeryn offers to show Volmae how to make the chakan oil. Freedom through war through science: not a John move; it's a PK move but it's good. Tanga and Hybin make their way to the front of the crowd as Volmae's complaining that they're not paying attention: "Look around you! We have no weapons!" John's like, "Pshh. Make them." Hybin says they once did, stepping out beside John and

Aeryn. Volmae calls for the guards; none responds. "They have deserted you, Volmae. If we are to die as a people, let us at least die fighting."  
"There is nothing we can do," Volmae cries. "The Peacekeepers, they are in control of me. They are in control of you." John outlines it again: "No, they're not. You are."  
Volmae's still too scared; Hybin steps in: "We will do it. One day at a time." Sigh. Well, I like the addiction level a lot here, the idea that your drug helps nobody but especially not you, and contributes to a global economy of oppression and murder, and that blaming your inability to do anything about it on your addiction itself is about the stupidest, weakest thing you can do. And the most common. Or maybe they're still talking about buying a Prius, I don't know. This episode and its context have changed the most in the can, as I said. Because from here, it looks like John and Aeryn just invented the Taliban. "It's your decision. It can all start tomorrow."  
Volmae: "No." She raises her hands to Hybin, and they touch: "Tomorrow is a rest day. A *real* rest day." I kind of love her, you know? Can't blame a girl for respecting the power structure, even if her fear was clearly unfounded.

-- Page 17 --

Back on *Moya*, Aeryn's removing John's tummy worm. Rygel is watching from near John's head. She pulls it out, and it wiggles around in her hand, and it is gross. "Hybin was right. This worm was quite easy to coax out of you." John says that Hybin was also right about how painful it would be. Rygel tells him to drop the bitching, considering His Highness got frozen twice and had exploding pee. Aeryn tells them both to STFU and get ready for starburst, all competent and adorable.  
"Hey, Rygel? What's up with her?" Rygel grumbles. "Oh, she thinks she's a scientist now. False superiority." Aeryn clarifies that she is not a scientist, but that she's what she's always been, which is superior. The thing about jumping into those kinds of scary changes is that on the other side you don't feel different, just bigger. Now that she has some science under her belt, she's Aeryn-with-science. The monster outside the house becomes a pet. Gorgeous. "If I were warmer, I would have an appropriately venomous reply. Be warned: I owe you one." He hops down adorably and takes off. John asks Aeryn how she's doing, and she admits it was nice to "triumph" using her mind. He pushes -- "Doesn't have to be this once" -- and, having had enough of that, she thanks him curtly for his assistance. He thanks her and heads for the door, and still full of competence, she calls out to him. "I'd wait...and let D'Argo come to you when he's ready." Look at Little Miss E.Q. all of a sudden! So awesome.  
Zhaan's quarters, where she and D'Argo are processing. D'Argo says maybe it's just the case that he's never going to be happy. "But you were, for five glorious days," says Zhaan, which is exactly the right answer. He says it wasn't really real, and she points out the subjectivity of experience: "There are no guarantees, D'Argo. We take each breath as if it is our last. And hope that the air is sweet." And it was. It was hell to look at, but it was definitely compelling; you can see somebody like D'Argo giving in without the benefit of drugged food, even. Just the chance to rest. D'Argo stutters: "I was going to...approach you. At the next celebration." She smiles and says she would have accepted, then holds out a hand, indicating the seat next to her. He continues. "When I was a boy, I dreamed of two very different lives." She laughs: "Only two? I wanted hundreds." (Your Sagittarius boyfriend says, "What are you talking about? She's fucking awesome!") D'Argo says that two was enough. "I would be a

magnificent warrior. Merciless in battle, fearless... The kind they write shintok sonnets about." She pronounces this dream a healthy one, and he brings up the other, secret dream. The one at the heart of his loneliness: "I also wanted a simple life. Family, children. A frotash garden that I planted with my own hands. I thought I'd found that." And it...sucked. Right? "Those kinds of dreams cannot be found, brave Luxan. You have to build them, and I promise you, your hands are still strong. There is plenty of time." Sweet and kind of eye-wateringly sincere and touching at the time; later maybe profoundly different. I love you, Ka D'Argo. There is plenty of time.

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## - Believing The Strangest Things -

-- Page 1 --

When the Long Hot Farscapey Summer was go, this was one of the episodes I was most excited about, which led invariably to questions of the "Why the hell do you like that random episode so much?" sort. I tell you this upfront: it's one of my favorites, so it's going to be one of those recaps. I'll keep it short.

Last week, everything happened, and then this episode got kicked out of sequence. Which at the time might have been better, because it is about a lot of things that don't really become clear until a few episodes in, but it's now in its right place because we can look at the whole picture at once. Basics: it's John's first day in his new school, and everybody's freaky and kind of off-putting, so he's still incredibly lonely. He's also twitching up a storm thanks to a siren that's going on all through the halls of *Moya*. We get to see a bunch of DRD's bumping up against a hatch, but nobody else has noticed that yet.

Twitching John is joined by Aeryn and D'Argo in the corridor, and D'Argo asks where the hezmana the sound is coming from, and John tries out his new vocab word for the day: "Sounds like it's from the inside of my head -- and what the 'hezmana' is it?" It's cute. Aeryn recognizes the beacon as a Peacekeeper thing, and immediately demands that he stop twitching at her. There are hilarious nonverbal twitching movements, and she gestures at her eye. I am so feeling her on the stop-fucking-twitching issue. It's pretty obnoxious. He's like vandalizing his own face with that shit. John apologizes and blames the frequency of the alarm, giving the simile that it's like it's melting his brain...and then realizes that this is *Farscape*, so it's quite likely that it's actually melting his brain. My question is this: if the alarm were actually melting his brain, would anybody notice? What, like he'd start acting really erratic and shifting in and out of his accent and going crazy for no reason? Wouldn't that be fucked up?

Zhaan and Rygel have located the hatch where the DRD's are going nuts, as has Pilot. Rygel is, of course, complaining about the noise, and Zhaan is, of course, pretending that she's in control. She removes the hatch cover as John and the Adrenaline Twins come pounding around the corner. D'Argo peeks inside, Aeryn peeks inside, John twitches and peeks inside. The camera is very wiggly so you know this is no ordinary *Moya* malfunction, but something really important. Zhaan

congratulates Pilot on having stopped the alarm, and the silence is something that you, as the viewer, are in a position to also feel grateful about. "I have only neutralized the internal sound -- the device itself is still broadcasting some kind of signal into deep space using *Moya's* hull as a maximizer." Twitching John: "Using my skull as a maximizer. Why am I still twitching?" He just told you, dolt. Aeryn identifies it as a "Paddac beacon," which is set to go off if it doesn't get a regular signal from the control collar the PKs put on the Leviathan. Which, Zhaan reminds us, was removed when they escaped. D'Argo asks Aeryn why she hasn't brought this up, and her answer is just vague enough that I think it's kinda obvious. The things that lady will do without letting herself know she's doing them. I generally think Aeryn's got her shit together better than anybody else, but her capacity for denial rivals that of even Zhaan's stupid blue ass. John's simple, but there's something nice about being so very simple that you have to actually take drugs to start repressing, you know?

-- Page 2 --

Aeryn makes to stomp off after snitting at D'Argo all, "Look, I'm new to all this escaped prisoner crap, alright?" I assume she wants to leave immediately so nobody will have the chance to remind her that "Don't expressly notify the enemy where you are" is not exactly on the AP curriculum -- it's more of a Fugitivity 101 kind of thing -- because that would lead to questions about how she still can't admit that she's not a Peacekeeper anymore, and that while she knows with her head that they'd shoot her ass in the eye, her heart just wants to go home. Luckily, she's saved by a DRD, which enters the hatch and gets fried all to hell. Pilot notifies everybody that the broadcast is actually getting more intense and that if there's a PK patrol within a "quarter light-cycle," they're nicked. D'Argo looks at Aeryn and she's like, "Hell." The whole time, D'Argo thinks the mission is to help *Moya*, but Aeryn thinks the mission is really to keep running: ops v. tactics. I like that.

I thought at the time that a lot of this D'Argo bugging Aeryn stuff was just shorthanding it for us that nobody trusts anybody else because it's only the second episode, but now I think he's got the right idea. Zhaan asks if the beacon can be removed, and Aeryn shrugs like she just wants a cigarette and why can't they just stop bugging her. Claudia Black doesn't have a whole lot to do in this episode, and we don't really get inside Aeryn very much except for the next scene, but I love the choices she makes in this episode: 40% annoyed, 30% out of her depth, 10% condescendingly amused by everybody, 100% kind of an asshole. She's hilarious almost the whole time. Less so: D'Argo getting all slapsticky "I'll handle this," and sticks his giant head in the tiny hatch, and that's as far as he can get, because he's gigantic, which: maybe D'Argo just doesn't have a gift for spatial relationships but I'd think you could eyeball that one pretty easy. (Poor Chiana. Or, I guess: "Way to go, Chiana!")

Zhaan, who is still not the boss of me, asks Pilot whether the device can be removed, as if nobody thought of doing that. Pilot says the jury's still out, and Rygel bitches some more and says they're broadcasting their position "like a two-headed drunken..." something, that I'm going to pretend was "trelkez," which will make more sense when we get to "That Old Black Magic," because that episode bookends Zhaan's story here. As well as exposing her as a big blue fraud, and being the only Maldis episode that doesn't make me want to poke out my own eyeballs with fondue forks. John asks if they can't muffle it somehow, and everybody tells John he's an idiot and makes "John



is an idiot" faces at him and each other, because (for the third time, now) it's using *Moya's* entire hull. D'Argo tells Pilot to shut down the entire section of the tier, and Pilot is very pissy because he's already thought of each and every one of these ideas: "That is *Moya's* primary neural nexus, I cannot shut that down." In these early episodes it's like a zombie movie, and everybody thinks they know best all the time. Well, that is a constant throughout the series, but in these early ones they're also strangers, which is the best part of any zombie movie, the thrown-together part.

-- Page 3 --

John suddenly notes that they're passing through a system that has a planet with water, and Pilot corrects him: "Not so much water as...bog." John says they can just use that, and everyone's completely weirded out: take *Moya* down to the surface? There are good things and bad things about being the new kid in school -- such as having ideas that nobody else would have, because they're scary or wrong or weird. "She can do that, right?" Twitch. "Right?" Aeryn's scared, but Zhaan is intrigued, and asks Pilot if it's possible. There's a subtlety to the way Pilot answers that young Leviathans often "play with a planet's gravity" and "see how close they can come." "There's a tale about an adult male who once touched down on a planet's surface, though ... no one knows if it's true or not." John twitches some more at the scary tone, and John -- because his is the only idea currently -- says that if she can't do it, they can all just stick their heads between their legs and kiss their asses goodbye. Which oops everybody out, because: what does that mean, why would you do it, and how would that help? He just shrugs. "It's a saying."

There's a long scene with everybody in command as *Moya* heads down. I guess we left out the part where they talked her into it. Rygel freaks out because he's small and bounces, being made of rubber; Pilot's image bounces around in the clamshell, which is funny and adds to the chaos; everything is shaking; Zhaan still thinks she's the boss of me; the music is insane; D'Argo falls down. But guess what John and Aeryn are up to? It's an episode of *Farscape*, so I'm sure you already guessed that they found the one niche in the wall that's just a titch too small for grown adults, and have managed to get themselves tossed in there with her arms around his neck and his hands at her waist. I don't know how probable that is, because I don't know about all of *Moya's* crevices, but I do know that John and Aeryn have an eerie way of landing in one of them and getting smooshed together about twice a week. They land, lots of staring, John and Aeryn standing in their little niche as though they haven't noticed but simply just don't feel like stepping out of there. Both of these -- the not noticing and the not doing anything about it -- are also central parts of the ongoing grab-ass tableau. Maybe John can repress, just a little. Rygel notes that they are sinking in the mud. Credits.

*Moya's* actually sinking quite rapidly but eventually stops once they've almost completely submerged. John asks Rygel if he's okay, and Rygel emphatically -- at some point his voice stopped being quite so gruff and British and regal, and I missed that for a while -- and gruff-Brit-regals that he is not okay, because they are "In mud! Under the mud!" Aeryn notes that Hynierians are aquatic, not that we'll see it in the next 86 episodes, so what's the diff, and Rygel gets very pissy: "Aquatic. That's water, not mud. Mud is...mud! You can't breathe in it, you can't move in it. It holds you, it grabs you, it sucks you down. You want to know about mud? I know about mud!" John

nods the hysterical poignancy of this little speech: "Guy knows mud." Among other things. Farts, feces, urine, exploding urine, uterine fluids, blood of all colors and various viscosities, explosive diarrhea, six different kinds of vomit, and assorted other goos, schmutzes and assorted nastiness. And when he's not literally dealing in these, his personality pretty much smells and behaves like them anyway, which is why he's tough to watch but essential to the show and the psychological makeup of the crew. And to this particular episode, actually. I hate him, but I don't blame him, so much as the fact that they filmed in Australia. Fart jokes are just funnier Down Under. D'Argo confirms that the beacon's now insulated, and Pilot tells the worried Zhaan that *Moya* is scared as hell.

-- Page 4 --

So now what? Stuck in the mud with a quiet beacon they can't get rid of. Aeryn checks out the hatch and notes that the beacon was "hastily installed," and D'Argo says they should just chop it out. Aeryn pours out some forty about the fried DRD and everybody realizes that Rygel's the only person that can get in there. This is probably his best episode, to be honest. I like him a lot here: "Oh no! You covered me in mud because I had no say. But in this, I have a say -- and I say no! Get someone else to do your dirty work!" Aeryn makes to smack him, and Zhaan is of course very put upon. D'Argo rumbles, "He'll do it," and Pilot tells them all to cram it for a sec. "That is *Moya's* primary neural nexus. It is an intensely sensitive area." John asks "how sensitive is sensitive?" but Aeryn doesn't even know what that word means: "Look, she's just going to have to endure it." Pilot tells them that the level of pain involved in cutting the beacon out will be intolerable, and might kill her. Just one quick thing here about how, on this show, biology is personality -- which is why all the farting and shitting all the time -- so dig what we're saying. There's a thing in her brain, her mind, that's endangering her -- and getting rid of it would be so painful that it might kill her. Now, everybody on the ship wrestles with the same thing, in every episode basically, and they all think that it's so painful it will kill them, but that is because they are fucked up. *Moya's* the only one who could say, "I simply cannot cut this thing out of my brain because it's too hard" and you wouldn't accuse her of being a whiner. Well, I can think of one other example, about two seasons from now, but that's it -- and it's not a metaphor in that case either.

Because Zhaan is all about the palliatives, she immediately wonders if there's an anesthetic or something they can use. "For a Leviathan? There is without question no such...." Pilot trails off, and D'Argo warns him to continue. It's something called "chlorium," he explains -- and Claudia Black continues to be hilarious, staring into different areas of nothing space at random and being incredibly bored by all these grubby people doing surgery on the poor little Leviathan. She does everything but glance at her watch. Pilot explains that chlorium is one of "the six forbidden cargoes" -- this one because it's a numbing agent. Makes sense. D'Argo asks if maybe they happen to have some around, and Pilot's scandalized reply -- "Never!" -- is hilarious. Zhaan explains that it's a common element that comes in many forms ("an atmospherically induced isotope of twinium"), and John asks if there's any out on the planet.

-- Page 5 --

Some time later, John comes to get Aeryn for the mission. She stares into space and ignores him and is irritated and pissy. John yells that it's finally her chance to "flex those big Peacekeeper commando muscles out in the field!" and gets very enthused, but she's like, "Peacekeeper. Yeah, really." John asks what the problem is, and it's Aeryn so you know it's crazy talk. Her problem is that she has found and explained a "top secret tracking device" to a "bunch of escaped prisoners" and will now be leading a mission to destroy it." John takes care of these with a quickness. "Well, number one, you're not leading the mission. Number two, those Peacekeepers you're so worried about, they'd kill you right now. It's the Peacekeepers who..." and she cuts him dead. "Turned on me for speaking up for you. Don't know what I was thinking." He says that back home, it's called being stand-up, and she replies that she stood up, and consequently is homeless, not to mention marked for death. "Well, join the club," John twitches, and she looks away. John gets crazy cute about the twitch. "Hey, does this bother you? Because it bugs the crap out of me. So can we go? ...Before my EYE falls OUT?" She rolls her eyes but she clearly thinks he's a funny little thing. Why is John on this mission anyway? Because (a) he's a "scientist," (b) he's a liability and can't be left on his own at any time, and (c) Zhaan's the only one who's a bigger girl than he is, which (d) leaves only a Muppet.

Stepping out of *Moya* into the wet air, John stares around. He's so happy and still: "Kinda like Louisiana. Or Dagobah." "Where Yoda lives," he says off Aeryn's confused look, grinning and messing with her affectionately: "...Just a little green guy. Trains warriors." Aeryn's like, "Whatever," but he grins outrageously cutely anyway. They head out into the swamp, and D'Argo immediately gets angry with the analyzer they're using to find the chlorium. "Peacekeeper technology! You use it," he grumbles, shoving it at Aeryn, and she won't even touch it. "Techs use them, not infantry." Which means several things simultaneously, because this is the first we've heard about the PK Tech Boys and PK Tech Girls, or about Aeryn's technophobia, both of which are major points in her development...and in John's, who takes it from her and immediately gets it going. "Pilot says you touch this, this and this. Works just like a VCR, except easier." Techs use them, not infantry. Not warriors like D'Argo and Aeryn: scientists like John and Lyneea, whom we'll meet a little later. I love these little fractal moments in the show, where some tiny little interchange actually tells the whole story in twenty words or less.

-- Page 6 --

But even cooler, this is further paralleled within the episode itself, which is about a clash between military and pure science, once the bad guys show up and Lyneea has to decide on her allegiances. Which is the other reason Zhaan and Rygel didn't come down with them for the mission: Story A is about what it's like to be a scientist, surprised by beauty, other uses of knowledge than violence, so all you have are scientists and soldiers. (Story B is about the strength inherent in passivity, the balls it takes to be a healer, which is another path that doesn't involve active violence -- what makes it surprising is that neither of the fighters, Aeryn nor D'Argo, is really punished for straying into this episode at all, which usually they would be, although it continues the painful job of breaking Aeryn's indoctrination wide open, announcing that intention throughout pretty loudly.)

Of course, the analyzer immediately starts working. Aeryn says the reading is weak, and that if that's the level they're going to find, they'd have to "bring back half the planet," and D'Argo agrees they need a more concentrated source. Some kind of vehicle approaches, and they scatter. As people search all around for them, John lies in the brush, staring -- and then is startled by D'Argo and Aeryn as they drop on either side of him, protecting him. He's just a tech, he can't take care of himself, and I love that even at the beginning of the show, before anybody makes friends, they just naturally cover him whenever the shit happens, because they know he's not up to it. D'Argo says they need to draw the people away from the ship, but that's too short-term for Aeryn, who wants to get the hell out of there -- warrior v. soldier -- and she corrects him: "We need chlorium." D'Argo gives them their orders: he and Aeryn will distract the searchers, John will find a better source of chlorium, and they all will meet back up at the ship. As plans go, it's one of the least lame these three will ever come up with: D and Aeryn can take care of themselves, and John only operates properly when there's nobody around whatsoever. D'Argo makes a scary growling noise and takes off in one direction, Aeryn does a crazy bird sound and runs off in the other, and John skulks out into the forest.

Zhaan wanders into Pilot's chamber and looks at the freaking out DRDs. Pilot informs her he's done analyzing the connections between the beacon and *Moya's* neural system: "The interlacing is...extremely intricate." Zhaan asks how on earth the PKs could have managed getting something like that aboard without him or *Moya* even noticing. Rather than explaining the horrible truth, he just tells her that they tranked *Moya* upon first capturing her. "The weak and the old do not survive, which I suppose is part of its purpose," he says. Which is pretty horrible on its own. "I thought I had discovered all they had done to *Moya*. Obviously, I had not." Zhaan tells Pilot not to blame himself, which is very sweet if you ignore the fact that that's her answer for everything, and Pilot says that even with a bunch of chlorium, "there will not be enough time to complete the separation before *Moya* succumbs to her own intense weight." That's what K-Fed said!

-- Page 7 --

Twitching John approaches a farmhouse with an intensely huge and vaguely crazy-looking satellite dish setup outside, which some weird music is all wow about. He goes into the barn of the farm, and quickly gets a good chlorium reading. He then notices that he's totally in a barn. Like a normal human barn on a normal Earth farm, and starts to wig. He picks up a lightbulb, which is like a normal Earth lightbulb except with a weird green filament instead of the normal kind. Temptation and refutation, which will keep him on his toes once he starts interacting with the people and the environment rather than just waving the analyzer around. D'Argo hits him on comm, and John and Aeryn both try to fill each other in at the same time, talking all over each other. It's funny and human, but I think it's also kind of telling that it's John and Aeryn that can't wait to fill in the gaps for each other. As John begs them to join him in the barn, because he's in over his head as usual, some scary feet come down a set of stairs and head toward the barn, hauling a bucket. As the owner of the alien feet comes closer, John finally drops his comm badge and hides behind some hay or something. Barrels.

The alien is, of course, a little boy who looks like Henry Thomas, but with freckled, Botox-looking alien cheeks and crazy elf ears. His name is Fostro and he lives here. "Who's there? Who are you and what are you doing around my Mom's stuff?" Seeing it's a kid, John stands and comes out, trying to be calming. "Don't be afraid. Ah, I'm not here to hurt you." Elliott asks where he's from, and John's like, "Um, out of town." The kid identifies him as an alien, and they trade names, but then the kid suddenly drops the bucket and runs off, I assume to grab some Reese's Pieces so they can do this shit right. John calls after him, but Elliott's all, "MOM!"

John follows Elliott into the house, the kitchen, and the kid grabs some kind of scary-looking weapon and points it at him. John realizes that he's been brandishing the analyzer, and apologizes, dropping it onto the table. It's scientific equipment, not a weapon, and the whole episode is about knowing the difference or getting stuck in the middle. Elliott's mom, Lyneea, comes toward the kitchen, talking. John approaches to introduce himself, and a very wary Elliott finally shoots him with the weapon thing.

After some crazy Bojangles knee action, John goes down. Commercial.

"I can't move," John mumbles. Lyneea enters bitching: "Fostro, I am in the middle of what could be a very real extraterrestrial event. This is not the moment for you to...." She sees the pile of John and drops what she was carrying. She stares as John mushmouths some more. "Why can't I move. I can't feel my body!" Lyneea creeps closer, and the joy in her! "Oh my God!" John's less concerned with the very real extraterrestrial event that's going on and more confused about his general rubberiness issue: "John: All my bones are... I'm going to recover from this right? Completely! Right?!" It's hilarious. I wish Lyneea could see the humor here. Instead, she grabs the stunner and aims it at the John puddle. "Fostro, move back." John pulls himself weakly to hold the table leg and she tells him to stop moving. "Please," he begs, "I already told your boy, I'm not here to harm you." Elliott tells his mom that John's from space, and surmises that he arrived in "that thing" she was tracking last night. John introduces himself, and points at the sky with his thumb, confirming Elliott's guess. "I'm talking to an alien? You're an alien? And I'm talking to you? In my kitchen?" That's when I fell for Lyneea. John too, I think. Or at least he recognizes that gleam in her eye. She sends Elliott out to the car and is very high-pitched. John tries to calm her down by telling an ugly lie. "You don't think we came alone, do you? If we wanted to contact some government, some agency, we would have." He's grossed out at himself. "We chose you."

-- Page 8 --

Zhaan enters Rygel's quarters, where he's having himself a snot on the bed. "If this is about me climbing around in the ship's entrails, then you can simply turn round and go back the way you came." Zhaan asks His Eminence for permission to speak, because she knows his whole deal, and because she is manipulative. Rygel breathes regally and gives his leave. "Pilot's done all he can," she says, but the device is frying anything metal that comes near it, which is why that poor DRD got toasted. Zhaan tells him that they have to "start the separation procedure immediately" and can't wait for the others to return. I guess this is because of the intense weight issue. Rygel asks how they're supposed to do it without chlorium, and she smiles. "Among my sect, I am a ninth level Pa'u." Which is nearly true. "A priest of that level can harbor the power to...share another being's pain. If you are willing to begin the procedure, I'll do all I can

to alleviate *Moya's* discomfort." He turns to look at her: "This is an awfully big ship," he grumps, and she smiles a bit ruefully. "Don't I know it."

Aeryn and D'Argo, those mighty warriors, are now hiding up a tree. Aeryn sits between D'Argo's legs as they scan all around for the searchers -- at one point, D'Argo's hand drops to her shoulder, and she huffily shoves it off. D'Argo is awesome because he totally forgot that Sebaceans are racist pigs and think of Luxans like buffalo soldiers. Aeryn is less awesome because she didn't, and she doesn't even have the plausible deniability of being a robot lady because now she's even below him on the Racist Pig Flowchart of Peacekeeperism. He tells her to be careful and calls her "Peacekeeper," which makes her snort. "If I was a Peacekeeper, would I be sitting on this planet next to you?" Aeryn, you're boring me. You can be more. D'Argo growls and does...something behind her back. I have no idea what it is, like he reaches down and scratches his ankle. Or, knowing this show, does a quick readjust. Aeryn's boring even herself and wants to leave, but D'Argo says they should wait until the "hounds" are further gone.

"Oh fine, let's just perch up here and do nothing then," Aeryn bitches, and D'Argo tells her to speak up if she's got any problems with his strategy. She laughs rudely. "I should have known that this would be Luxan strategy -- probably why you did so well against the Grezodians." D'Argo's like, "You don't even know about the Grezodians," but she says it's the biggest joke in the world, "how the Luxans went screaming into retreat so fast," and D'Argo tries to get real with her. "Those monsters killed thousands of Luxan women and children, we had no alternative to retreat." And then, as though to get our respect, points out that they later got their revenge. Aeryn hums condescendingly (and at the exact frequency of a complete hypocrite): "And killed thousands of their women and children." D'Argo protests that they had no alternative for that either, and Aeryn -- because Peacekeepers are so very above mindless conflict -- says the Grezodians probably believed the same thing. She's just having a conversation, not even thinking about the fact that this is his people they're chatting about. The idea that the PKs haven't done anything wrong -- that she herself is just getting fucked over by an accidental coincidence, and that even her death sentence and exile are correct. Well, I mean, she has to believe that, right? If it's not a Peacekeeper war, then war is stupid, because the Peacekeepers are always right. Even if it kills her coming from the other direction, it's all she's got. She's like an ideal Peacekeeper. Her loss of innocence has so much to do with realizing that people not only break the rules constantly -- but have been doing so the whole time. Pretty ugly stuff.

-- Page 9 --

In Lyneea's kitchen, where she's still got the stunner trained on John. He explains about how they're looking for something for the ship, and she asks where it is, and asks if there are more like him. "Like me?" You're looking at her. He laughs. "There are...others, yeah." Lyneea gets very excited and starts babbling about her readings and how something flew in low over Kasta Swamp and realizes that's where his ship is. Elliott's like, "We gotta tell!" and she tries to hush him. "Look, I understand what a phenomenal moment this is for you," John offers, and Lyneea scoffs with a giant, adorable grin on her face. "Do you? Can you? I mean to you, space travel is commonplace, but to us here?" John gives her a short speech that parallels her day



with the one he's been having, all about the wonder of being a scientist and loving E.T.s and having it all proven true in a moment, and she melts a little, and I think that they love each other, because they get it. She's a scientist, he's a scientist, they're both in love with space. And up on *Moya*, he's surrounded by a king, a priest, a soldier and a warrior. Nobody he understands, with troubling customs and no mercy in them at all, all of whom treat him like crap. Aliens = automatically better, because they have spaceships. And that's John now -- so he'd better turn it around and be sweet to this woman, because nobody was nice to him.

He smiles at her. "I'm not exactly what you expected, am I?" She grins at him and marvels that he's so much like them, that she assumed first contact would be with somebody "radically different." Thank God she's meeting him on a good day, then. "Radically insane" barely covers it. "So have you been searching long?" Comparing notes: how alike are we really? "Since I was Fostro's age. My parents bought me a telescope. I used to look up at the stars at night and dream...of this moment." They connect. "You said you chose me," she says, and his face falls. He didn't know how awesome you were when he said that, sweetie. Sad, now: "Well, we saw the radio telescope and we figured you'd be somebody who'd understand us, not hurt us. Hoped you would be." Since all John Crichton can do with his mouth open is dig himself deeper, he tries to change the subject. "You have star charts? And deep space photographs? There's a chance I might be able to recognize something. Constellations, galaxies. I might even be able to get a fix on the Milky Way." Elliott calls bullshit on the imputed omniscience -- "Don't you even know where you are?" -- and Lyneea looks back up at John. I bet he remembers that disappointment particularly well. It's kind of unfair that Lyneea even gets to have this limited degree of first contact excitement, considering things only started getting shitty when John discovered alien life. It's not Earth he misses, ever -- it's people. People and chocolate. I think we can all agree that he has the right idea.

-- Page 10 --

Because of the metal-zapping issue, Zhaan has sent Rygel into the hatch with a bone knife, which she stole from D'Argo's quarters. Rygel realizes what it is and gets horrified. "This is a Tokkar knife! Do you know what ceremony young Luxans males use this for? On themselves? At that certain age?" She nods, like, regrettable indeed that you're messing around with something that gross, but when he's done bitching she goes back to her usual serene competence. "Then I suspect that D'Argo will want it back unharmed." She goes to the bulkhead pillar opposite the hatch and asks if he is ready. "*Moya*," she says, bracing herself against the bulkhead, "I will take your pain." She puts her cheek and hands against the pillar, and her pupils go away and then her eyes turn white. ("Shut up, Storm," is what my friend Lily would say at this point.) "You may begin." One of the things I liked best on first blush about this show is the way that everybody carries equal weight: John's the main character, but only provides our entry point as a human being surrounded by weirdness, which is what you are when you watch the show -- but as much as it's about John and Aeryn specifically, it's still an ensemble cast. I was struck by how many of the storylines in each episode didn't even include John. Whenever he's doing something, you can rest assured that somewhere, there are Muppets and people in tons of weird makeup doing stuff that's equally important, and I can't think of any other show where the

weirdoes get equal time like that. Maybe Will & Grace, but they're all such caricatures that it doesn't really have the same bite. Rygel makes the first cut and both *Moya* and the camera go completely insane, shaking and whirling and moving too fast. Zhaan's clearly in pain. "Continue. Rygel, you must continue!" He...doesn't, and then finally lunges forward again.

Aeryn and D'Argo's tree, where Aeryn is marveling that "this primordial rock" actually reminds John of home. The way she says it, you can tell she was just sitting there thinking about John Crichton for a while before she spoke up. We've all done it. D'Argo scoffs, "No interplanetary travel, retrograde technology, fossil fuel-burning ground vehicles...." They giggle at what a savage he is, but Aeryn gives a different flavor of hum after they're done laughing. "Does that bother you?" asks D'Argo, grinning hugely and cheekily behind her in the tree, and her back goes very straight because she simply has no idea what he could possibly mean by that, and she changes the subject. "No. Of course not. Look, he's had plenty of time to find the chlorium, I'm going back." D'Argo and Aeryn agree that she'll signal him immediately once she finds him. And if he's not there, D'Argo says he'll find him. Aeryn rolls her eyes, like, just because they are united in looking down on John doesn't mean that she doesn't still get to look down on D'Argo too. You could be more. "You think I will not?" And she snorts, but it's not entirely unfriendly. "I think I will be searching for both of you in less than an arn."

-- Page 11 --

Lyneea calls in Elliott, having made breakfast, and John makes small talk, asking if she's an academic. "Military," she says. Another connection. "They provide me with most of my funding. What's left of it... According to them, it's highly unlikely that you even exist. My biggest concern is, I'm not quite sure how they'd treat you if they knew you were here. Our military's not the most compassionate, tolerant group." He smiles. "No, militaries rarely are. So I'd be quite a coup for you?" She agrees that she'd be funded for life with the "walking, talking evidence" of him. She calls Elliott to the table again, and brings John a plate. "I don't know if you eat! ...Hell, for all I know this stuff could be horribly toxic for you." The analyzer freaks out on the breakfast food, and Lyneea goes into Mama Bear mode, grabbing Elliott and long-jumping across the room. John babbles nervously about how it's just the analyzer, "a science tool," and that the thing he needs is close by. He scans the food and the analyzer goes nuts. "It's in the food? How can it be in the...." Lyneea stares, arms around her son, frightened to death as John talks faster and faster. "I'm looking for an element called chlorium, it's what I'm looking for and there's gotta be some somewhere in this..." He finds a jar of the stuff that's setting the analyzer off. "What the hell is this? What is this?" He finally realizes he's being all weird and erratic and Asperger's-y and apologizes profusely for once again scaring the shit out of Lyneea and her kid. He hands her the stunner, which he's been waving around crazily, and gives her some mad puppy-dog eyes. "Whatever is in this container, this is what my ship needs." Lyneea hears some cars and vans coming toward the farmhouse, and realizes the military is on their way. She and John lock eyes, and from outside, Ryymax calls to her. He's not the real estate guy, he's a military guy. She tells Elliott to get John upstairs, and makes a steely face. John starts to tell her she doesn't need to lie or screw herself over on his account, but she just yells at him to get moving.

*Moya's* lights are flashing, and she's making weird rumbling noises, in pain, and Zhaan is straining to stay upright as *Moya* twists. They are both in terrible pain -- and Rygel's still cutting. Pilot screams that *Moya* is "in intense pain!" in that hysterical way he says stuff. Zhaan finally howls and drops, unconscious. Rygel calls out to her, and, getting no answer, finally crawls out to check on her. "Pilot," he says urgently, "I think Zhaan is..." but the corridor is just dark, and Pilot's not responding, and Rygel is very tiny as we zoom suddenly back away from him, still screaming for Pilot. Muppets with feelings, unending angst, constant bodily fluids, complicated serialized storylines, the Crichton's magical male ass motif, and main characters dying at a furious and unchanging rate: the Six Forbidden Cargoes of television. So how come it's so good? Commercial.

-- Page 12 --

A few minutes later, Rygel's tenderly trying to wake Zhaan. "Wake up, you worthless weak shank of blue flesh!" The lights come back on, and Pilot calls out to Rygel. "Is anyone there?" he shouts on the clamshell, scared. "Yes, of course we're here," grumbles Rygel. "I'm been screaming my shunting head off!" Zhaan groans as she starts to come around, lights flickering. Pilot yells that *Moya* is "succumbing!" and Rygel says, sadly, "She's collapsing." The less people are around, the less of a dick he is. Which is I guess the point. Zhaan looks around, worried for *Moya*.

While Elliott and John bond over the childhood dream of meeting real live aliens -- and the relatively uneventful, kind of scary, mostly sucky reality they've both experienced at this point -- Lyneea's downstairs with a billion military lying up a storm. Ryymax hassles her about the phone -- which was the thing she dropped when she first saw John -- and about how he really needs her to get it together and confirm the sightings at Versant Observatory. When he asks her about her stinkface, she covers by reminding him how last year Versant's "definite UEO sighting" turned out to be nothing special. He hassles her about how excited she was earlier when her readings were going nuts, and she says she just wants to be sure. "Civilians have seen it," he says. "This is the day you prove to all of us who doubted you wrong. I don't understand -- when you first contacted me, you were extremely excited about your readings." She protests that she's still excited, but he says she's not. "You're nervous." It's true, she has no poker face at all.

Lyneea finally comes upstairs, and Elliott runs to her. "Looks like they're making us their base of operations," says John grimly. She tries to comfort him and sends Elliott downstairs to say hi to Commander Ryymax, so he won't know anything is up. John's like, "Does he have to?" So sweet. Lyneea tells Elliott not to say a word, and beeps his nose lovingly. She's really keeping this shit together. John's like, "How's that going to play out?" but she won't look at him. I don't really trust Elliott either -- he's kind of a nervous kid. "Look," says John. "There's a very good chance I'm going to get captured here, right?" And she's contrite without agreeing. He tells her at the least, he needs to notify *Moya* that he found the chlorium. She's still surprised by that, because it's just a common household ingredient -- like salt, or sugar, or cinnamon, or chocolate -- called "anlux," but he's like, "No matter how dumb it is, they need it." (Coincidentally I'm sure, but remember how anlux is an "atmospherically induced isotope of twinium"? It's pronounced like "twin" and not "twine," although I guess either is appropriate.

Everything that happens here is an isotope of meeting Lyneea, John's twin out of all the planets in all the galaxies. Like I said, it's a coincidence probably, but still cool.)

-- Page 13 --

Aeryn comes down the corridor, Rygel calling out to her. "We need to take off immediately!" he shouts. "The ship is collapsing and Pilot is refusing to follow my commands." Heh. I would like a whole episode of Pilot trying to deal with Rygel. Pissy v. Prissy: two Muppets enter, one Muppet gets shaken baby syndrome and then falls for a very long time. Aeryn notices Zhaan trying to get up, and Zhaan again starts saying they're out of time. "We need to remove the device right now," she says, and Rygel tells them both to fuck off. Aeryn reaches out to him to shove him back in the hole, and Rygel takes a nasty chunk out of her arm. She gasps, and there's a lingering, horrible shot of him chewing on her arm chunk with a grin on his face and blood everywhere. Gross me out, Rygel! God! Aeryn steps up again, I assume to rip his face off, but Zhaan touches her arm and asks her to wait outside. As Aeryn leaves, she mutters darkly and melodramatically, "Your greatest fear will come to pass, Hynerian. Someday you will die at the hands of a Peacekeeper." I get the same way when I stub my toe or get scratched by a cat. There's something very comforting about talking like Moses when you're in pain.

I like this next part very much. Rygel grumbles off Aeryn's little speech that she won't even get the chance because they're all going to be crushed by *Moya's* Britney poundage "...or I kill her myself." Zhaan smiles and figures it out. "You're afraid! You're afraid this great ship will die." It doesn't push his usual bravado buttons because she says it lovingly and without scorn -- makes it something to be celebrated, not weakness. "I don't know what I'm doing. I've always had others to do for me. Even in prison I...I don't even know how to hold a tool." Those are for techs. I wish there were more meat for a Rygel/Aeryn comparison. All I know is that John loves them the most. More than Chiana, more than D'Argo, John loves Sparky. It drives me bats. "There's great pain in this for all of us, isn't there?" asks Zhaan, and it's not at all condescending -- she realizes the relativity of pain, which is something that few people on this show understand, and it's her greatest asset: there is no difference between his pain at fucking up, *Moya's* pain at having nerve surgery without anesthetic, and Zhaan eating a whole ship's worth of agony. It's not just Delvian bullshit either: that's the way things work. He looks up at her, entirely innocent. Which is probably his greatest asset, and the other reason it has to be him that does this. "Come," she says, taking his hand. "We'll face the pain together." She leaves, and he continues to think and sigh, but she's got him and they both know it.

-- Page 14 --

"Will he do it?" Aeryn asks her outside. Zhaan says it's likely, and then touches Aeryn's wounded arm, offering to heal the bite. Aeryn pulls away and says they need to deal with the ship first -- again, PK training. Zhaan's like, "Right. I forgot you think everything's a training op and you're being graded. By all means, let that fester while we sit around doing nothing." Aeryn gets anxious about waiting for him to show, but Zhaan tells her to just give it a sec. "It's a big responsibility resting on those not-so-large shoulders," she chuckles annoyingly. Aeryn asks if it's true, that she can really remove the pain of the entire ship. "I only share the pain," Zhaan admits. "I'm afraid that *Moya* still bears the larger portion. I don't know how she's doing it." Aeryn's

like, "Um, how about you?" and Zhaan sighs humorously and ever-so-slightly nastily. Of course, this gets Aeryn's back up, because she's an eight-year-old boy a lot of the time: "Are you laughing at me?!" And Zhaan's passive-aggressive priestly bullshit rears its head. "Oh! No, no my dear. I'm not laughing. You just seemed, very briefly, to be...concerned for me." It wasn't that I was making fun of you so much as trying to make you feel bad about yourself. Much effing better.

I mean, I realize that Zhaan's bitter about the PKs and all that, and Aeryn certainly does act like a dick a lot of the time, especially w/r/t (a) other races and (b) the utter uselessness, as she'd see it, of Zhaan and her religious stuff. But you know what's better than telling everybody that you accept their faults all the time? Accepting their faults and shutting the fuck up about it. A real Ninth Level would know that. (Except when she pulls that shit on Crichton, because she's a lot funnier when she does it to him.) So Aeryn takes back that moment of admiration: "I am concerned only that you are able to complete your undertaking to share *Moya's* pain," and Zhaan's like, "Of course, of course. See? You're an asshole just like I said." There are a bunch of So There Eyes bouncing all around the corridor and Aeryn takes off, and Zhaan smiles after her and thinks about how superior she is to everyone in the universe. But most especially her oppressors, PKs like Aeryn, because how else could she have stayed alive for the hundreds of years she spent in prison except by thinking that, so you can't fault her.

Outside Lyneea's house, Ryymax is ordering up a hot dish of "biological containment" for when they trap the alien. It is regrettable that, among all the similarities to Earth, they have not invented bicycles, or else we'd already know how to get out of this one. Originally, like years ago, I thought the cool thing about this was the slap in the face for John: if you point the finger at aliens, and you're in the middle of outer space, you've got three more fingers pointing back at you, that kind of thing. But the episode's a lot better than that, because it takes it one step further: it's a reversal not so much of us/them as it is you/everything -- they're all aliens, the whole universe is aliens, singular and unique and fucked up and weird, and the way that you resolve that is by getting the hell over it, looking upward and sharing in the wonders you can see, all that crap -- by making the connections. They're not aliens because they're blue or gray or made of rubber, up on *Moya* -- they're alien because they're violent convicts and soldiers, and he's just a nerd. My side, your side. We assume, as nerds, that he's on the right side -- that violence and conflict are less necessities than just hiccups in the system, problems to be worked out -- but so much of his growth and becoming a man is about violence (the science of violence, the violence of science), about learning to cross and use both sides in order to become something else entirely from either of them. When he brings peace, it won't be through science and it won't be through violence. It'll be through both. It doesn't matter where you start as long as you turn into the opposite: that way you get A and you get B, but you also get everything in between.

-- Page 15 --

Upstairs, Lyneea connects some kind of TV to the satellites and they talk shop -- she says they call wormholes "ribbon holes," and that they don't exist. John's like, "I agree with you to a point, and that point is the time I got ate by one." He admits that he really has no idea where he is, and then she asks him the awful question: "You didn't really

choose me, did you?" But she's smiling, and they're connected, so he just makes a gah face and says, "No." She waves it off and smiles, and tells him the signal is routed through the big dishes outside, a very wide signal as strong as possible. John starts calling for them, and it's Pilot who eventually shows up, asking how he's doing this. Lyneea stares at Pilot, the music goes crazy, she's seeing a real alien. "Is this guy more what you were expecting?" grins John, and she just watches, transfixed, overjoyed. Pilot fills him in on the *Moya* stuff.

Ryymax finds the analyzer on Lyneea's kitchen table, but is interrupted by a terrible actor of a soldier, who calls him outside to see the other one they've captured -- D'Argo. Heh, Aeryn was half right. D'Argo fights a bunch of soldiers out in the house's driveway, and gets stunned as John watches, worried.

Aeryn watches Zhaan shivering with pain, holding fast to the bulkhead. Inside, Rygel apologizes to *Moya*. And continues to cut, and to hate it.

Lyneea comes into the barn, where Elliott stares at D'Argo. His wrists have been chained to the walls, so he's all spread out. They always do that to D'Argo because he's so big. D'Argo tries to tongue-whip the soldiers, but they step back. Lyneea and Elliott, for all their protestations of xenophilia, are as freaked out by D'Argo as they were by an armed and crazy John Crichton. "He's phenomenal!" crows Ryymax, who then tells Lyneea she and her son need to evacuate. "It's no longer safe for you here." She just stares. I've decided not to worry about the translator microbes here, except to say that the only person who speaks to Lyneea is John -- D'Argo just hisses and growls and yells and acts crazy, and may or may not actually be doing this -- because the only person who speaks to John, in the galaxy, is at this point Lyneea, and that's why I like this episode. There's a reason the only non-Aeryn girl he ever loves in this story is a PK Tech Girl -- he's an Urp Tech Boy, for now. That starts here, I think. I really like that Aeryn's at the end of the tunnel of love, though: start with things like you, and gradually move toward their opposite, because you change along the way. Start with chocolate, end up with broccoli, you know? He likes techs now, because the rest of it's too scary. (Don't even get me started on Winona.) The point is, this fellow-feeling and unspoken understanding between Lyneea and John is the best part of the episode, because it reads true (it's also what makes his relationship with Katralla in "Look At The Princess" work, too), not as romance but as love all the same. All this time I thought it was sad and he'd miss her because she was so human, and the planet was so Earthlike, but that's not it at all. It's sad because she's so John-like.

-- Page 16 --

"What kind of ship are you?" Lyneea flips out, back upstairs. "That thing on the computer in there and now this one trying to pull down my barn! You said you were a scientist, a science ship!" Science v. war. "I am a scientist!" he shouts. This is like month three in the dating cycle, this part: the "Um, I know that you don't love Mamet because nobody actually loves Mamet so give me some credit" phase. "My ship is.... It's a prison transport. Escaped prisoners." She's like, better and better. So wait, you what? "It's a galactic misunderstanding," he lamely "explains," and she's like, enough. "Take your precious anlux and get out of my house." John protests that he's not leaving without D'Argo, and she explains, nearing tears, that he's going to be vivisected, "laid open on an autopsy table by dawn tomorrow," which is what she's been bending over backwards this whole time to protect John from. Vivisection is a constant



fear with this show -- like, in every episode somebody is getting cut open or excavated or having their parts traded out or turned inside out or surgiered or whatever -- because bodies will always, always be scary, and something that is inherently out of your control, and somebody else getting control of the thing you can barely even keep up with, and doing whatever they want with it, is terrifying. John steadfastly refuses to leave without D, and Lyneea is just like, "Fuck!"

Rygel: "Only a few more to go." He continues to cut, and apparently hits a really bad one. *Moya* groans, Zhaan screams, and loses her grip on the bulkhead. Aeryn catches her as she's shuddering, "Help me back! Get me back!" I'm really quite proud of her today. I bitch about her, but I mean: this isn't about getting her off, for once. This is done out of love, pure love. Nobody's going to clap for her except *Moya*, who loves her anyway. Zhaan and Rygel have been onboard longer than you can count, which means they know each other the most, and they love *Moya* the best. Aeryn yells to Rygel to "get it done in there," and he "thanks" her for her encouragement, and everybody's really stressed, except for a woozy Zhaan, now being held against the bulkhead by Aeryn, who is beyond stress and in agony.

Upstairs in Elliott's room, Lyneea and Ryymax are at the computer, and she's lying her ass off about how the transmissions are getting interrupted, but that before, there was this awesome thing she saw completely randomly. She plays a tape recording of Pilot ("Crichton, is that you? How is your signal getting though?") -- which is AWESOME, because she's a scientist and Ryymax is a soldier, and she's dicking with him using a VCR -- just like John with the analyzer, when he surprised D'Argo and Aeryn with his tech skills. Ryymax pops a boner and asks if she can tell the "signal's" origin, and she smiles. Gotcha.

-- Page 17 --

John crouches outside the barn as, inside, Elliott and D'Argo stare at each other. Elliott finds the comm badge John dropped at the beginning, and then John and Elliott have a long ridiculous conversation that takes place entirely in twitches and winks. Ryymax orders the team standing around D'Argo to move out, and the couple that are left warn Elliott not to get too close to D'Argo, as John sneaks up behind them and knocks them out. D'Argo complains at John for taking his time, and John scowls at him as he unties him. He offers Elliott the chance to shake the hand of a real alieny-looking alien -- "Go ahead! He doesn't bite." -- and grins at D'Argo's scary look. John watches, happy, as Elliott and D'Argo shake hands. He can at least give the kid that, bicycle or no.

Stuff's now fully coming out of the walls on *Moya* -- that's gotta be one of the six signs to take your Leviathan to the ER. Rygel cuts, the lights flicker, Zhaan and *Moya* completely freaking out. Aeryn, bracing herself against Zhaan's back. I like any scene with the two of them, because it only works when they don't talk. You have friends like that? I like it. It makes sense, I think. (What the hell would they talk about? God? War? Anarchy? The awesomeness of rules? Prison recidivism? "This one time at Boot Camp?" And every time they do, it goes horribly wrong. But when they don't talk, it's beautiful.) They each have the strength that the other lacks -- and they touch the part of John where the other doesn't reach. Aeryn lends her this strength now, but she won't know how much strength Zhaan herself commands for a long time.

Outside the farmhouse, Elliott gives John his comm badge back as Lyneea explains she sent Ryymax off to Acon's Field -- opposite direction from the swamp. John wishes there were more he could do for her, and she chuckles: "You've altered the perceptions and beliefs of an entire planet." You've told them they're not alone. He smiles and agrees that this was a big day as far as the task list. D'Argo urges haste, and John says goodbye: "Keep watching the skies." He kisses Lyneea, tastes the chocolate, and she licks her lips. "That's how your people say goodbye?" He asks if, given all the similarities, they don't do that here. No bicycles and no kisses. What a shitty planet. She's lonely, too -- surrounded by soldiers, raising her son. I'm glad they got caught so she can get funding and stuff. I hope she does awesome things. She licks her lips and smiles adorably. I love her. Elliott shakes D'Argo's hand again, says goodbye to his first real alien, and they take off back to *Moya*. "You are the luckiest nine year old around. Someday you are going to have a very singular story to tell. Can't tell it for a long time of course but...someday." She bites her lip, tastes the chocolate, watches them leave. Of all the guest stars, I think she's probably my favorite. Well, Ancient Jack is pretty awesome too.

-- Page 18 --

As John and D'Argo call over to Aeryn on comm, Rygel's finishing up. She tells Pilot to get her in the sky, and Pilot says he can't: "The pain along the neural nexus is too great!" But they have the chlorium now. You know, by the end of the series that's like a minor miracle: they always show up late or fuck it up somehow, but it's rare that it helps anyway. Rygel cuts the last connection, and Pilot confirms the beacon's no longer transmitting. Rygel is beautiful for a moment: "I did it! I did it! I did it!" John pokes his head in the hatch and tosses him the bag of chlorium, asking him to spread it all over the places that he cut. But it's not just Rygel who did something new: "Prepare for lift off. *Moya* has never done this before. I don't know what to expect," worries Pilot. Down in the hatch, Rygel tosses equal handfuls of chlorium around the nexus and into his own mouth. Heh.

There's still shit dripping down the walls and weird noises, but the environment is already much improved. Aeryn sits down on the corridor floor, where Zhaan lies unconscious. She wakes her quietly, and Zhaan smiles. "Ouch." John calls Aeryn to command, like they can do anything to help *Moya* wherever they are, and she sighs and gets up. Rygel crawls out of the hatch and lies beside Zhaan, exhausted. "Never, ever, again," he grumbles, proud and tired. It's a beautiful little moment with the two of them, the most alien and the oldest among them all. The cutter (violence, destruction) and the healer (science, knowledge). The Muppet and the crazy-ass.

Commercial. John and Aeryn come running into command as *Moya* slowly lifts out of the swamp and into the air. Pilot calls triumphantly that they're going to make it, and everybody stares out.

Lyneea watches them go from her steps, her child asleep beside her. The music is triumphant music, and her face is full of wonder. She is facing to the right. John stares back at her, facing left, looking out at the planet. They miss each other. It's painful. Aeryn watches him and finally murmurs, "Don't tell me you're going to miss that rock?" And he smiles sadly. "No, not that rock." Aeryn leaves him alone, still looking back. He's not talking about Earth.

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## - When We First Took The Pill -

-- Page 1 --

The big kids are down on a planet bazaar, looking for medicine for poor Rygel, who's got the Klendian Flu, and as you can imagine, he's being a stand-up guy about it. John meets a little puppetry magic in the form of a two-headed trelkez bird-thing: "Hey, little guy. Aeryn, check this out! One critter, two-part harmony." It looks like a fantastic Japanese beast I had when I was a kid. Yellow. Aeryn says it has too few heads: "The more heads, the better value they are. Their brains are the tastiest part." John looks at the adorable critter: "Like you'd cook this guy and eat his brains." Never! "Raw." Think that's cruel?

Zhaan and D'Argo hang out in the corner, where D'Argo laments jokingly that Rygel's flu isn't fatal. Zhaan laughs. Think that's cruel? "Zhaan, I'm suffering here." A purple version of the [people from Planet Shroomadelic](#), although more attractive and wearing cooler clothes, comes slithering out of somewhere with an apple in one hand and a crackpipe in the other. "Your pardon? I sell jikset root...among other interesting things..." Zhaan says he must be a "gift from the Goddess." The Goddess of Jerkwads, maybe. Goddess of Bad Boyfriends and Even Worse Ideas. Stop throwing those fucking words around if you still don't know what they mean.

Two short paragraphs in and we've already dropped an F-Bomb on my girl Blue. Probably a record. John's walking through the bazaar, having been left to his own devices -- smooth move, there, *the three people who know a thing or two about a thing or two* -- and this stupid clown named Igg comes running out with a syringe in one hand and a copy of *X-Men III* in the other, and the first thing he does is call attention to John's (ahem) huge feet. "You want a hand with your problem, help's right here and his name is Haloth." John snorts that his problems are probably out of the guy's league and starts away. Oh right, when I said "clown" I didn't mean it pejoratively, like the guy's a douchebag (though he is) -- I mean like he's parti-colored and pantalooned. Like maybe next time he'll be a hideous stained-glass painting, maybe. He is fractured and he fractures. And every piece of color is a different flavor of pain. Watch:

"Oh, incorrect. Haloth can fix up your crummy life, *John Crichton*." Which stops John in his tracks so effectively that Igg easily steers him into a deserted alley. "First, you're dying to get home to Earth; second, there's a Peacekeeping cruiser hunting you; third...you're not interested, are you? Oh, well. Sorry to bother you." John calls bullshit and says the clown must have heard Zhaan or D'Argo or the credits mapping out John's entire life story. Somehow. Igg: "How could I have overheard this? Your mother's maiden name was McDougall. You skipped third grade. And you lost your virginity to Karen Shaw in the back of a minivan." It wasn't a minivan, it was a four-by. I know this part by heart. Karen Shaw is the most direct shot of grace this show ever had, and proves the existence of God in the *Farscape* universe, because only a loving and omnipotent -- and seriously warped -- creator could come up with Karen Shaw.

Heaven for everybody. "John-John, you're grasping at straws, John. Look, what's wrong with listening to the pitch? You don't like the product, you don't have to buy it. Last chance, Johnny-o. You want to meet Haloth, walk this way. If not, hit the bricks." Um, okay, you kid. Twenty-three skidoo! Instead of pardoning somebody for a hamburger, John...walks right into it and there's red smoke and then he's in a stupid place with lots of walls that don't go anywhere and some weird statues, and Igg is Haloth: weird something on his head, gray hair and icky-looking beard, clothes like *The Dark Crystal*, all black and silver and red and gray and cringing. But how? And for why? "The words I need elude translation's grasp. Suffice to say, I simply wished you here." If wishes were horses, he'd do something fucked-up with those too. Credits, during which we wish Igg, Haloth (and Kyvan) and Maldis far, far away.

-- Page 2 --

"Ah...dried gavork," Zhaan gushes over Bad Boyfriend's gavork, which she pronounces quite aromatic. "Oh, I've never seen such quality!" *That's what she said.* Dude's name is Liko and he's just totally honored by this compliment from a Delvian Pa'u. "Twelfth level, are you?" She preens: "Only ninth, I'm afraid." If that's in crazy-person years, then yes. He says ninth is impressive enough. He tells her to watch out with the Trellon oil -- not because it's toxic, but because it's a "sensual stimulant" -- "Enriches the conjugal experience." Oh, gross me out. I mean, that's what's going on here, Zhaan's always had a sex/death thing going, as we'll learn, but do we have to watch these people doing this? Because while the actors are both very attractive, right this second one of them is PURPLE and the other one is BLUE and they are both dressed in RAGS and they are acting like FREAKS. "You can vouch for this personally?" She somehow manages a half-decent wolf whistle using just the muscles in her cheeks and eyes. "Yes, though it was some time ago," he says. (Deleted: He's all, wanna try it? And she's all, I've never even *had* champagne before, and then they make creepy faces at each other.) Oh, just do it. This kind of foreplay leads to cruelty and also a rumbling in the tummy.

John asks Haloth how far this "wishing" thing can go. "Alas, I cannot transport you back to Earth, or act as guide or compass to that end." John confirms that he just said that shit, and Haloth...takes an abrupt turn left. "You are a fugitive pursued by Crais, who bears a dark desire for revenge although you did not seek his brother's death." This sounds like a fabulous party.

Speaking of, welcome to Crais's Fabulous Command Carrier, where the Marauders are coming in to refuel and then going right the hell back out again, or else. "Captain, the Marauders have been on continuous patrol," says *Crazy Hot* Lieutenant Orn, First Class. The pilots are so fatigued that it would be dangerous to launch..." And Crais is like, "You know what's dangerous? Stepping on my shit." Yes, sir. They all run around and do PK stuff and then there's a "priority communication from High Command." John asks Haloth to let Crais know that killing his brother was an accident, because that would be super-cool and then they could be friends. Haloth's like, "But then he wouldn't be chasing you all ass-over-teakettle and having 'vengeful thirst'!" Um, correct. "My talents can provide you with the means." John is excited about the idea of having a little confab with Crais, and Haloth's like, "Rock and roll," and disappears before John can ask him the obvious questions you should always ask the crazy wizard, like, "Is this going to be some kind of murder-spree," or "Do you validate?"

-- Page 3 --

Crais listens to the priority message as beautiful XO Teeg watches. "Captain Crais. You are to cease your pursuit of the escaped leviathan transport. Withdraw from the Uncharted Territories at once and return to First Command for new orders. The Council awaits a full explanation of your failure." Crais notes to Teeg -- not so comforting -- that the Admiral requested her to hear this order in case he refused. "He'd expect me to take over command in that event." And? "My first loyalty is to my Captain." Huh. Peacekeepers are weird. I mean, he's not only nuts but really bad at the job he's decided to do, which is track down six people and a ship that could not matter less. "And mine is to the Council," he...totally lies? Or maybe there's just an obvious "...Except when it's my insane revenge agenda on the table, then it lies with me, and all your asses are cannon fodder." You say that out loud, it gets messy. "Is there any other record of this transmission?" he asks, wondering if he can bargain for more time. There is not. Also, the other thing he just said, which you might have not noticed, is that he is going to kill her ass *dead* in about one second. He dismisses Teeg and smashes the transmission chip, as Haloth appears in the Carrier and zaps him right out of there. I assume everybody throws a party at this point. "My name is Haloth. Welcome to my home." Crais yells all excited, because he's Crais. "Your swift and mighty vessel is undisturbed. Traversing territories yet unmapped." *That's what she said.* Crais offers to kill Haloth and Haloth is like, hang on though. Crais charges him and he turns into red smoke. "Before you vainly try and do me harm, behold this glimpse of one whose death you've sworn." Crais knows this one already. "Crichton."

Aeryn's in the bazaar wondering where John went, and D'Argo reveals that he can track John by smell. "You can smell Crichton in all of this?" Turns out John's "odor" is even stronger than Aeryn's. She complains that she has no odor, but then they find John, all sprawled in the dirt. Aeryn sends D'Argo to find Zhaan, panicked. "Oh, dear...oh, dear. Friend Crichton, I have news that you will not like," says creepy Haloth. "Like you couldn't find Crais?" There's a semi-horrible morph as Haloth takes on his real face: Maldis. Black vinyl, HUGE Elizabethan collar, stuff on the head: "Actually, I found him quite easily." John *finally* twigs that something awful is happening.

Back to the bazaar, in Purple's shop, where Zhaan examines John: "No obvious injuries." Cool, thanks. Is that the extent of your examination? Because...never mind. "Could he have been poisoned?" asks Aeryn, and the answer is "Kinda." Zhaan's like, "Why would anybody hurt John?" And Aeryn's like, "He's totally lying right there, hurt. You can totally see him with your big blue eyeballs. Have *you* been injured?"

-- Page 4 --

D'Argo comes in hissing with a girl he says witnessed John wandering around. "He was alone, I swear." D'Argo calls her a liar and in fact she is lying. They yell a bit. Liko asks her straight up if John was with Maldis. "Who is Maldis?" That's what Aeryn wants to know. *She thinks.* (Who deals with Maldis? Emotional John and repressed Zhaan. And later, Chiana and John: the only two purely emotional people on Moya. Even D'Argo by that point is repressing actual emotional turmoil -- and by that time, bad-ass Zhaan won't give Maldis a second thought -- but when Aeryn fights Maldis, she'll do it in the real world; she'll fight his body with hers.)

In Maldavia, John and Crais circle each other -- no grapevines here! -- and they talk about how (a) Crais is really there, not a hologram, and (b) he's not there to chat, but to kill John to death. John's like, "Um, I'm not going to fight you." Which is not the first thing I would think of, if somebody just explained to me that they were going to kill me. John picks up a spear and begs Maldis to explain why he's doing this. "My services found a better price." Crais's pain outweighs John's, I'll give him that, but that's not what he means. "I'm playing for bigger stakes now, John. You can still talk to Crais...just don't expect him to listen!" He cackles stupidly, and the true horror of his obnoxiousness is finally revealed. And yea it is horrible. Then Crais takes away John's spear and slashes him across the hand.

And just like actually happens, if you get hurt in your dream you get hurt in real life, so a big wound opens up across John's real-life hand. Zhaan's like, "Obvious injury! Spotted it! New cut!" but Liko isn't so excited about her [Scullery](#): "Your companion is as good as dead. And so are the rest of you." (See how I didn't even have to go back and un-capitalize "companion"? I'm learning!) D'Argo's like, "Is he contagious?" Yeah, with the Hand-Cutting Fever that's so prevalent. "It's not a disease that's done this." -- I'd argue that point -- "It's something much worse. A dark and dangerous force, wielded by an evil sorcerer whose name is Maldis." This is the kind of shit that will make a person hate a Maldis episode. This shit right here. "He feeds upon pain and death, gaining strength by tapping into the life-energy of others. Maldis invaded our planet and killed half our population. We who survive are prisoners, kept alive only at Maldis' whim." *Hey, there's this really cool show about all these very interesting and important things that you should watch. Disregard the Muppets.* "And this Maldis motherfucker? The 'evil sorcerer' that 'gains strength' from 'life force' and keeps people alive 'only at his whim'? Am I expected to 'disregard' that shit too?" ...I give.

-- Page 5 --

"So this entire planet is subjugated by one man," Aeryn revs up, but Liko stops her. "Not a man! A *cruel* and *malevolent* being who's learned to *transcend corporeal form*." You know what, I'd take fifteen Maldises over one Liko any day, because I like to know where the danger is coming from. Aeryn advises him to lead an uprising of the people like usual, and Liko's like, "Do you understand this word 'invincible'?" He admits that pre-Maldis, he was a high priest. Zhaan's like, "Awesome, we totally have to bone now." Liko fought back, but his "spiritual powers weren't strong enough," so he got the beatdown, and now it "amuses" Maldis to keep him alive, in poverty. When you put it that way, it's kind of amusing. "Hey, Purple Preacherman, how about your life sucks from now on?" Liko tells them how they're going to die some more and D'Argo says that they are totally going to bounce. "You can't escape Maldis's grasp! Even in space -- hundreds, thousands of [miles] away -- he can get at you!" Oh my God, enough with the Maldis. Maldis is the *Syriana* of the Uncharted Territories. "Yeah I'm sure it's incredibly amazing, but I am soooooo busy though. ...No, I mean it. Stop talking about how awesome it is or we're going to have a tussle." Like you just kind of start thinking maybe Maldis *isn't* so powerful, just because he's overselling it so bad. Like maybe Maldis sucks, you start to think. ([Veronica Mars](#) and [Arrested Development](#) fans, pay attention. And you [Battlestar](#) people too. More flies with sugar, less flies with crazy-eyeball obsession. Take it from [one who knows](#).) Aeryn's like, "So what is his actual M.O.?" Liko points at John: "That's it, basically. Rips your soul out your body,



yadda yadda." D'Argo wonders aloud how they're supposed to fight that kind of party foul; Aeryn is like, "Oh, we're going to eat his lunch, don't think twice about that." She asks Liko where she can find her future bitch -- he's in the abandoned corner of the bazaar where nobody ever goes, naturally -- and Aeryn's like, "It's one thing to terrorize indigenous inferior idiots and primitive purple perverted priests, but quite another once I head up to Moya and get every gun I ever owned." Word! John's body with no soul is only half the story! Three-quarters at best!

-- Page 6 --

Maldis bugs hiding John about how Crais is going to fuck him up, and then connects the dots by doing all of his irritating voices in a row: Maldis, Haloth, Igg. Three times the hate is not enough, dude. He sucks exponentially. Then there's some taunting, and John tries to punch Maldis, but hits the wall, because hands are at a premium today in Maldavia.

They've got John in a lovely bed on Moya, sleeping like a prince. Rygel's pretty sure he's dead, Aeryn's pretty sure Rygel's cruisin' for a bruise. D'Argo and Aeryn tell whining Rygel they brought him up for safekeeping, and so Rygel can tend to him, if he starts to bleed again. "Shouldn't Zhaan be doing that?" She's...*busy*. SUCKING. Aeryn: "She's helping by applying some Delvian mysticism to the situation." Heh. Aeryn's got my back. Rygel reminds them that he is very, very sick, and D'Argo smears him with something called "yuvu," which Rygel thinks smells like something called "trat". Science fiction. Words. Sigh.

"There is nothing to be done," Liko pep-squads. "As soon as Maldis is finished with your companion, he will come after the rest of you." Zhaan wants to fight, Purple can't fight, what if they combine their powers: Might there be [sexy results](#)? A *world* of No. Liko is like, "You have helping powers, not fucking-up-vampires powers." She says that's negotiable, with his help. (Just like last week when she told D'Argo how much fun it was to break his warrior's code, she's sacrificing her own fake shit to save something real.) "Can you be guided? It's not just a matter of skill, it's intent. You must want to do harm, cause pain, even kill. You are a Ninth Level Pa'u. You simply aren't capable of that." Zhaan admits that she was, once. How much do we know about this right now? Just that she was ["something of an anarchist,"](#) right? Man. No, she gave D'Argo [the "savage" speech](#) out in the wacky turnips. Both times D'Argo. Interesting. She respects him so much more than she does John, even though she loves John more. Yeah, that fits. She could only ever love what she didn't respect.

Maldis: "There are no exits! Save your energy for fighting Crais!" John registers as an objector and Maldis is like, "Cool, but he's playing." And in he comes, stupid ponytail all floppy, jaws all flappy, and then there is man-grappling. They discuss once again how John killed but did not murder Crais's brother. What's his name? (Tuvok? Turok? Heh. I am not a nerd! *It is you who are the nerd!*) I couldn't care less. John -- in a beautiful looking move -- gets Crais on his back, spear to his throat, and hisses about how it was an accident, one more time, and then they both breathe very hard for awhile, and then he pulls the spear back, and Maldis calls him a chump.

-- Page 7 --

Speaking of which. Bizarre Bazaar, where the cute little bird-thing from Act I (the gun on the mantel) is chirping sweetly. Liko: "Your first lesson: inflicting pain." He urges her to stop petting the trelkez and hurt it with her mind powers. They discuss this at length

and review all the super-powerful vampire stuff some more. She vibes the trelkez with some pain energy, and she starts crying, and he calls her a big baby. "You're right. I was once capable of cruelty, but now I have evolved past that." *Evolved? Try repressed! You've choked off all your real emotions.* Oh, that was Liko talking. Not me. No sir. Zhaan cries some more and says he's a liar. "You think you've smothered your inner fire and found enlightenment. All you've done is make yourself cold. Look at you. Struggling to contain what you're feeling, fighting to keep control. What is it you're so afraid of?" Um, the red eyes of doom, perhaps? I am. She protests that she's not afraid and he scoffs. "I am a *Delvian Pa'u*. Nothing can frighten me if I do not wish it." He tells her you can't wish fear away, you have to face it. Which is what she told Rygel last week, word for word, and everybody else in the whole show the weeks preceding. "Are you afraid of Maldis? You can destroy him!" And Zhaan admits that's what's terrifying her. Yeah, I feel that. The sympathy for Zhaan is rare, but strong when it comes. This storyline is pretty rough to watch from here on out. And it doesn't...actually get better, really. The second she stops being an asshole, you get Stark, and MAN is that a whole other flavor of annoying.

John sets this handy giant firepit on fire by accident, and then remembers how Sebaceans hate the heat. He pushes the advantage. "Crais, lay off for a minute and listen to me." So John can beg for his life? No. "So I can tell you why your brother died." Yeah, great. "My module, the one I was piloting. How does it compare with your Prowlers?" Crais fully scoffs. "Right? Yeah, my species is so primitive we all live on one planet. I was orbiting when a wormhole sucked me onto your turf. I didn't intend it, and I'd go home in a second if I could." Crais points out that he'd lie to save his ass. "You think I attacked your brother? Oh, yeah. I popped into the middle of a giant space battle and decided to go one-on-one with a total stranger in a far superior ship. Does that make any sense?" Crais characterizes the interaction as "ramming," and they go around and around. "Why do you keep blaming me? I did everything I could to avoid him!" Maldis congratulates him on his near-sincerity. John complains that it was actually quite sincere. Also true.

-- Page 8 --

Maldis offers to help John with a physical example of Crais's problem, and then there's a hologram of the dead guy, Tauvo (*Tauvo!*) Crais. "Officer Tauvo Crais reporting. It's an honor to be on board, sir. Captain's bars suit you, my brother!" Crais wigs. John demands to know why Maldis is doing this to Crais, which is nice because (a) John is nice, even right now, but (b) also because that's the whole answer. Maldis is forcing Crais to look at the thing, but not so he'll get better: it's so he'll get worse. Maldis then does a Before & After and makes the fake Tauvo burst into flames. Crais wigs. "And Crichton did that," Maldis giggles. Crais wigs and also jumps over the firepit. Maldis offers his belief that it doesn't really matter what John says, Crais is going to kill him. O RLY? Are we having another dÃ©jà vu episode?

Aeryn shoots at the door of the creepy corner of the bazaar where nobody ever, ever goes. Nothing happens. D'Argo believes the door is protected "by an evil spell," and she assures him that those don't exist. He's not so sure. Zhaan enters and tells them that all the guns can't hurt Maldis even if they got in there, because he is incorporeal. Aeryn asks what can hurt him, then. Zhaan: "I can." It costs her. Aeryn invites her to commence hurting him. "What are you waiting for?" she asks. Man, the panic. She's

been freaking out since the teaser. It's John! "A third choice, though I know there are only two."

That's what she does: like last week with the Sheyang. Can't run, can't fight. Guess you have to break the rules and betray yourself. "Let that evil flourish, or unleash another evil against it." She asks D'Argo how he'd call it. Respect. "I suppose I would choose the lesser of evil." NO SUCH THING. The relativity of evil is the most evil lie of all. Get a little on you or a lot, doesn't matter, but ignore it or explain it away and you've become a lie. A half-step off what you were. Minor key. Do the thing or don't do the thing, but don't dither around about whether or not you'll still deserve the gold star at the end of the day. Your goodness is the bedrock on which you're standing, all the time. It's all you've got. You can't wish it to giant size by sitting in a room and praying for hundreds of years any more than you can mourn for it having turned very tiny. It doesn't change size or shape, it just is. It's what you come home to, when you're alone and safe. She looks and looks and looks for it, and the whole time she's standing on it, it's what's holding her up. It's God, and she spits on it. Over and over.

-- Page 9 --

John spots Crais through a gap in the walls of Maldavia and calls to him. "You can't run forever," smolders Crais. "I can wait." John tries to get him to understand about the whole conflict thing and how it's getting Maldis off. Crais, awesomely: "I don't care." John explains, pointing out the manic stuff Maldis shows up and does whenever they get into it, and how his level drops when they're avoiding each other. "Maldis doesn't command me!" Crais screams. John talks sense. "It's your time, fast forward...now. "Listen. You're beating yourself up because you were supposed to protect your brother. I understand that now. And you can believe this or you can shine it, but honest to God, I *tried to get clear*. I didn't mean for him to crash, and I'm sorry he's dead. Do you understand that?" Doesn't matter. "It changes nothing. Tauvo is dead. Struck down by a weak, pathetic, inferior being." He wigs some yelly "It's your time, fast forward...now" some more and then runs off. Maldis appears: "You're not nearly as thick as I thought, John. You begin to understand what I'm all about." Vampire. "I admit, I feed on death. But don't we all? Some eat plants, some meat. I consume the life essence itself. Preferably medium rare." See what we're talking about? What the hell is that? Banter? Whatever, you poncey old vampire. But he can't kill them yet -- in John's words, interesting vis-à-vis Zhaan's stuff, "Why all the foreplay?" -- because "Death is the main course, all this is the appetizer." He warns him Crais is coming back and politely asks that John fight, not run. "I'm getting hungry again." Which breaks John's heart, he is assured.

Zhaan apologizes to Liko for her behavior. Yeah, that behavior where it hurts to hurt things? He just looks at the trelkez and tells her to continue. Rygel calls her on comms to bitch about how the goo is worthless and she needs to solve the problem for real. "Wait," says Liko. "This is a better lesson." Rygel continues to be irritating on the comms. "Give pain to Rygel?" she asks. And like, it's horrible to contemplate *this one time*. Maybe it's because he's so sick and pathetic and crotchety, or because he's been awesome lately, or because last week was so hard, but right now it seems unimaginable. He continues to squawk horribly at her. "Zhaan! Did you hear me? I demand you bring me something that works!" Zhaan stalls, saying she can't reach all the way to Moya. Liko offers to "help."

Commercials, and then Liko and Zhaan touch each other's shoulders and get all vibey to send pain up to Rygel. The one week he hasn't done anything bad. "Why don't you answer me? What are you doing down there? Can you find me a remedy or not? If not, why are we still here? We should leave this useless planet immediately and find a place where I can get some relief from this..." And then he screams. And it is monstrous, and it goes on forever. And then silence. "Part of me enjoyed that," Zhaan admits. Liko says this means they're nearly ready. Um, like where the fuck did Liko go to divinity school? He's like that scary guy in *Poltergeist II*. I don't know why I keep bringing those movies up, sorry. But seriously! *Night Of The Hunter* and *Priest* and that Heath Ledger movie about the Sin Eater are like pro-clergy compared to this shit. This guy would make *Stigmata* be like, "Hey, respect religion, dude." And let's not even talk about Zhaan.

-- Page 10 --

Fake out! Let's talk about Zhaan. My friend Karen wrote to me about this show earlier, for some reason. I had sent her a paragraph from last week's recap. And she said, "Do you know that passage from Maugham's *The Razor's Edge*..." and then accidentally pressed send. So I knew she was probably retyping it or whatever, and I wrote back, "You mean this one?"

*"...it may be that the way of life that he has chosen for himself and the peculiar strength and sweetness of his character may have an ever-growing influence over his fellow men so that, long after his death perhaps, it may be realized that there lived in this age a very remarkable creature."*

Which is how I was feeling about Zhaan at that time of day. But she said no, it's the part where the guy goes to Tibet and the monks send him up into the cold mountains with like, some books and basic supplies, and tell him to stay put until he reaches enlightenment. So he's out there freezing and reading and eating through his food and firewood, just readin' and searchin' his soul, as one does, and the food runs out and the firewood runs out. If the fire goes out, he freezes. If he leaves without enlightenment, he's a failure. So he sits there with some embers and his holy books and waits for a third choice. And he gets it, and immediately rips up his books of wisdom to feed the fire. When they're gone, he goes back down the mountain. Alive and enlightened. The last lesson of the quest is the realization that the quest only makes you *more* of what you already are. Teaches you to taste the rain. "At the end of the day," she wrote, "*Still alive* is the only truth that counts as universal. Gratitude for that is the beginning of grace."

And I, of course, heartily agree. Even now, Good Zhaan/Bad Zhaan is just a game she's playing with herself, a flashy trick, nothing up her sleeves, to distract herself from the work, and the peace, of existence. She's too angry for the balance. She's too angry to even hear it, on the edge of sensation, too angry to hear the love of the Goddess calling her home, over and over, for hundreds of years. The oldest game in the world. And meanwhile, *Real* Zhaan -- [Charlotte-Light-And-Dark](#) Zhaan -- is sleeping somewhere, beautiful and calm and already free. I'd like to meet her while we still have time. And THAT'S why I hate Zhaan.

Whatever. To Crais's Command Carrier, where Hottie Orn is telling Cutie Teeg that they have to throw a mutiny, because Crais is having a nice long coma. "Not while there's a chance of reviving him," she says. Orn threatens to contact High Command

for official authorization, and Teeg tells him sharply: "There will be no communication outside this ship unless I expressly order it. Dismissed." Oh, *snap!* (Heh, that's a joke. Punchline in a couple of pages.)

-- Page 11 --

Bazaar, outside the Kreepy Korner, where Aeryn is refusing to give up. "How can we fight a battle against an enemy whose defenses cannot even be breached?" D'Argo dÃ©jÃ© vu's for us. Aeryn...decides to shoot the door. Is this really happening? Did my DVD skip? She decides to overload the pulse rifle -- [Which we know how to do!](#) -- and blow out a whole wall. That's my girl. Not a good plan, but very fun to watch, for sure. D'Argo: "Won't work." Inside, Maldis answers him: "Might work. Can't have that." Aeryn's gun glows red with the power of the vampire and she drops it, all hot. I bet it feels even hotter to her than it would to you. Maybe that's another thing that has no relative value: red-hot stuff. D'Argo and Aeryn look at the gun and discuss how they have no idea what just happened.

"Captain Bipolar Crais! Let's say you *do* kill me. What happens then? You think Maldis hands you a trophy and zaps you off to your ship? What's to stop you from bringing your Command Carrier back to this planet and toasting the whole place? Think he's gonna risk that? ...He may not even let you kill me, he may drag this thing out for years and then kill us himself. Is your vengeance satisfied, if *Maldis* kills me?" This episode is...really, really long. Really long. John asks him -- again -- who the real enemy is. "Start thinking like a Peacekeeper." The magic words. Crais asks what he's proposing; a truce to nail Maldis together. Crais is maybe feeling that, but: intangible. "His power can't be infinite," John enthuses. "He's got to have some weakness. If we both stay calm and unemotional, he can't recharge. We could starve him out. Come on, Crais. This may be our best chance." Crais agrees to the truce, swearing as a Peacekeeper. But he is lying, because this episode is never going to end, so he comes after John with a chain and dislocates his shoulder. Maldis shows up to bounce around and act obnoxious some more. They chase and grab-ass and horse-play up one side and down the other.

Moya, where we've got a sick Muppet staring at an unconscious Crichton. Much more stimulating. Actually, kinda: "I don't know why I'm bothering. I don't care what Aeryn thinks. You certainly look dead to me. I don't know your customs for these situations, not that I care, so I'll give you the Hynerian ceremony of passage and be done with it. Ahem. *John Crichton, valued friend.*" He grants that this term is a stretch. "*John Crichton, unwelcome shipmate.*" Hmm. May you have safe transport to the Hallowed Realm." But not *the* Hallowed Realm, because that's Hynerian heaven. "Go find your own Hallowed Realm!" He pronounces the ceremony complete, and John officially dead, and goes ahead and claims all John's possessions for himself. He then attempts to remove John's boots. Which should take about an hour so we're fine. I'm just happy Rygel got a funny Rygel-ish scene after Zhaan's egregious logical and ethical missteps before. Puts things back into place, emotionally.

-- Page 12 --

Physically, you've got John slamming his dislocated shoulder into the wall. Something that is interesting in theory and should be in movies and shows all the time, but which never fails to freak me out when I see it. He's just an actor! His shoulder is acting! I know, I don't care. The Foley guys go fucking overtime with that shit and I cannot take

it. Also: stabbing in the abdomen, slow cutting, things in eyes, anything having to do with piercings or clowns or being stuck under the earth, or people touching other people's feet. In real life or on TV, I cannot handle these things. Maldis gets chatty with him about how John dislocated his shoulder before, when he trashed his motorcycle, blah blah, as the horrible crunching continues, and finally he's like, "You know what would make that shoulder feel great is a giant fight with Bipolar Crais and his chains and huge spears!" John just laughs: "Blood sugar level getting a little low? Need another shot of violence to kick up the old energy level?" Maldis admits that this is the case. "I'm getting tired of appetizers. It's time to dine." John asks if that's meant to be motivational. Not exactly, but...what if only one of them had to die? John gets angry and asks what the other one gets. Back to Moya. "Believe me. I give you my word." Oh, well then.

Liko: "When we reach Maldis, you must not hold back. Strike with all our combined strength. No hesitation. No weakness." "No mercy," says Zhaan. They can both go straight to hell.

Maldis introduces Round 115 and John and Crais face off once again. They can both go to hell too, frankly, if they're not going to do anything. (This recap is really just sliding into an area, isn't it?)

Zhaan and Liko do the shoulder thing and go into trances and start to vibe toward Maldis.

Fighting. John finally just gives up and starts choking the shit out of Crais. Whoa. I never noticed that little parallel before. That's kind of awesome. Although I guess I have to figure out a way to hate John now, seems like. Which is not happening. "I returned him to his ship," chuckles Maldis, and John shouts. "Bring him back! I had him!" Ugly. You think that's cruel? "Yes, you did -- took you long enough, but you finally did what I wanted." Which is to bring him Crais's Command Carrier, by making both John and Crais go crazy(er). Imagine what he could do with that! "Carnage on a truly massive scale!"

Zhaan and Liko: her eyes roll back and turn dark blue, he groans and acts like it's all just too very hard to be magical.

-- Page 13 --

"You want him to keep pursuing me," John stutters out. "So if he brings his ship within reach..." Yep. "He was seriously thinking of taking it home. Can you believe that? Now he'll never turn back! Deeper and deeper into the Uncharted Territory he'll go. And sooner or later, that ship will be mine." Given Crais's utter inability to find John, I don't know why Maldis doesn't just send out like a "PKs are Gaylords" email while Crais is still close by.

(Or, I don't know, *how about this*: MALDIS WAS ALREADY ONBOARD THE COCKADOODIE CARRIER WHEN HE ABDUCTED ITS COMMANDING OFFICER NOT A GODDAMN HALF-HOUR AGO. Or maybe I just don't get the real on space vampires in stupid clothes. I am...totally at peace with that. Or maybe I'm missing something. It's just that this episode is so terribly long, and they keep doing the same shit over and over and saying the same shit over and over like just Ctrl-V Ctrl-V Ctrl-V Ctrl-V and *I am dying here*. Why do I love this episode so much? Looking at it on paper it's like the laziest fucking thing ever. It's an act structure, an outline, with nothing filled in for the middle Acts. "See above re: what everybody's.. *still doing*.")



John hates that Maldis has screwed him by resetting everything to status quo, plus admittedly a little extra crazy -- which is like a third thing that has no relative value, bughouse is bughouse when you're talking about Crais -- and so he tries to stab Maldis, which does not work, and then Maldis decides he was telling the truth before about how one of them goes home and the other one dies, so that'll be John then, and Maldis gets super spooky, and John drops the knife.

Over at Bizarre Bazaar, Zhaan moans and drops, as Maldis draws John's soul out through his face, using only the magical palm of his mystical space vampire hand and his stupid voice hissing, "Diiiiiiiii."

Zhaan shows up and is pretty badass with her hands on either side of Maldis's head and blue energy. "John, I've broken through and made him tangible." Outside, Aeryn's rifle calms down, and the defenses around the Korner chill out. "He's all yours now," Zhaan says, shoving Maldis toward John. For such a punch! He hits a wall and explodes in red light; everybody falls down.

On Moya, John grabs Rygel's head, and he starts in yelling before he realizes he has no idea where he is or what's going on. "You died down on the planet. D'Argo and Aeryn brought your corpse up here and I...revived you. ...Yes. The others wanted to set your body adrift, but I insisted I could save your life. And I did!" John's like, "Awesome. Thanks." He hugs little Rygel. "Course you did. It's not Kansas, and you're way too homely to be Auntie Em. Come here, Toto." He kisses Rygel wildly and laughs his ass off. It is *wonderful*. Reconnection with the body, and with Rygel. Maybe he didn't lose anything today. Maybe he didn't lose anybody at all.

-- Page 14 --

Zhaan wakes up and looks at Liko, who's like, "I turned it up to eleven and now I am going to die." Good! She's like, "Let me help," but he goes on about how it's worth it now that Maldis is gone, and then expires after saying how it sucks that they never got to do it. Aww. Thanks for ruining the best character ever. Have fun in hell.

Crais bitches, back on the Carrier, about how (a) he doesn't need to get doctored, (b) there will be no record of this collapse, (c) the doctor's "utter failure to diagnose and treat" the coma will go unreported and unpunished, and (d) go away. Lieutenant Teeg helps Crais up after the doctor leaves. "Has there been any communication with High Command?" (Say yes, say yes, say yes. You're too cute to die.) "No, sir!" She proudly talks about how Hottie Orn wanted to authorize Crais's termination, "But I overruled him." So then, "No one outside of this chamber knows of the Admiral's orders." (Say yes, say yes, say yes. I didn't really think he'd do it.) "I saw to that, sir." *Snap* goes her neck. "Lieutenant Orn. Status report." Nothing to report. "Widen the search to dekka three. Take us deeper into the Uncharted Territories." And Orn does. Twenty-one episodes, three-act structure. Act I: Meet and Greet the Aliens. Fall in Love A Little Bit. Act II, Episode One: Here Comes Crais. *Faaabulous*.

Then, two horrible things on Moya, because we of course cannot do without the Downer Tag. D'Argo clarifies with Zhaan that Maldis isn't dead, just "dispersed." That's just great to know. First thing: "Zhaan," Aeryn says stiffly but sweetly as possible, "I feel I must apologize to you for mocking your courage. I see now that you are more of a warrior than I ever thought."

Zhaan nods, and leaves. Quickly. And Aeryn wonders why. D'Argo: "You could not have cut her more deeply." And Aeryn doesn't get it.

John records a message -- to DK this time -- about how he's still processing, how stupid it was that he couldn't just sit Crais down and convince him. "Well, I had my chance. And I'm never going to get another one. And he's going to keep at it, until one of us dies." Zhaan enters, looking shattered. "You look about as cheerful as I do," he grins. "Talk to me. What's up?" Zhaan, haltingly: "Before I became a priest, I was a savage." (Having emotions? Go to emotion guy. What's really effed up is when he and Chiana realize they're that guy *for each other*. So scary.)

"Yeah, I think I remember you saying that. I don't know that I ever believed it," he says kindly. Who's going to look into that face, at those strong hands, and see the wild thing underneath? "You've never seen that part of me. I thought I'd eradicated it forever." No big, right? You resurrected it -- just a little -- to deal with Maldis. "...so it's over." But it's not. It never was.

-- Page 15 --

"I feel it inside me still. Now I have to rid myself of it again. And I don't know if I can do it, John." *John*, she calls him.

"Well, is there anything I can do to help? Aw, c'mon, there must be something. I mean, even if it just means being a good listener." Second thing.

John rises, to touch her, and she lashes out again. He flinches and jumps, grabbing his wounded hand. First soldier down.

*"No one can help me."*

She recovers herself, horrified, apologizes. Goes running. And John stares after.

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<http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/show/farscape/dna-mad-scientist/>

## - Putting Out, With Dark Sunglasses -

-- Page 1 --

Man, all they have to do is mention Karen Shaw and I get all...let's move on. Like this one isn't wonderful enough. This is the one; this is when the show gets up in your face and demands your love and attention. "I am *Farscape*," it roars. Because if you're not ready for this, it's just a show, and that's fine. But you could be more. So we're sitting in Namtar's lab, with everybody sitting all breath-bated, John sitting in a chair I don't like to see him sitting in. And Namtar is saying, "If you wish to blink, now would be the time." Which is as good as anything for the line you'd put under John's yearbook picture.

Aeryn's would be, "Most likely to shoot your ass in the eye." D'Argo's would be "Most likely to have to deal with asshole progeny." Zhaan's would be "Most likely to be so super awesome except she broke last week and she's not actually the boss of you."

Chiana's would be: "If you think Aeryn's okay, I will redefine the concept for you, because *I am fucking fine*." Or possibly a quotation from Kerouac or something.

Maybe "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked," flipping off the camera even in her lame grade school hairdo. And Pilot's would be, "Most likely to deserve a fucking ice cream sundae at the least, an hour from now."

Namtar slides a needle into John's eye, on the off chance that he has some information having to do with John's eye. This is BS on several levels but maybe not what you think. First of all, Namtar is to my personal eye the second-most beautiful thing you ever see on this show (first being the Scarrans) and that's an issue you and I might have. I just love looking at the awful old bitch. His legs are double-jointed like a satyr because (a) that's *what he is* and (b) because his legs are left over from this ad they did about a thousand years ago where some guys were playing football with the Devil. None of this has to do with the story; I just really like the Namtar body and character and prosthesis and all that implies. Not about me, I mean. I'm not a leather-corset type, but the fact is that with alien makeups you can go this way or you can go that way, and the only things I really really enjoy looking at -- besides that bone lady -- are Namtar and the Scarrans. And yes, this is one of my favorite Season One episodes, but I don't know that it's necessarily having to do with the technical beauty of Namtar, because I am not creepy in the conventional sense. But he is beautiful.

-- Page 2 --

He is also a rat person. Which explains why Zhaan's wondering if John's okay with rat people poking needles into John's eyes, comforting words or not. And hey, watch out who worries about this shit, people putting stuff into John's body (or vice versa) that they shouldn't, or else Season Four won't make any sense. This is where that starts. John pretends it's no big and Namtar's done just so fast. D'Argo tells Aeryn she's next and she tells him to fuck off; D'Argo doesn't know what to do because that's him next then, and Aeryn tell him to stop being a pussy. "Pack it in the chair and get this over with so we can get out of here." Namtar calls him "my dear" and asks if D'Argo's uncomfortable because of Namtar's rep, which Zhaan admits, but: ""It is your reputation, Namtar, that led us here." D'Argo sits, as Rygel talks about what an honor it is to meet Namtar and "take part in his grand experiments." Good old Rygel. D'Argo gets stuck and John checks in with Zhaan about making sure this is worth it. "Namtar may have data that Moya is lacking: data that we're desperately in need of," Zhaan replies, like you never split an infinitive. They're going for DNA samples, hence the title of the episode, and Namtar clarifies that it's beyond just the double helix: "...To provide you with the information you desire..."

Aeryn interrupts. And this is important, because of them all, she's the only one with a vested interest in not knowing, and I mean to say *not giving a fuck*, where her DNA can take her. Because where Namtar can take her is, of course, death. Not less but more. So when Aeryn interrupts, she's really saying this is horrible. This group knowing where all of their pieces really go; this family she's built saying, "This is a lie, and I am here to find the truth." And if we're going to have a show, we have to agree with her on some way, because finding a way home for these characters is interesting, but it would mean that we'd lose them along the way, as a matter of course. And I will assure you that, if we do lose them along the way, it's anything fucking but, and you donâ™t want that. Tell me you don't want that, even now. Namtar reassures her and summons Kornata, basically a Sebacean type, for assistance. "I will do each of you in turn. But beautiful Zhaan, I have chosen to do yours first." Because she's been placeless the longest, because she's the most in need of anchor; because it's D'Argo that apologizes but Zhaan that continues to fall.

-- Page 3 --

Kornata reveals Zhaan's star map. "Go ahead, Zhaan," says Namtar. Her DNA has revealed where they are in relation to where she belongs. Which -- before the credits -- you know it is the problem, and not just because without homelessness there's no show. It's the problem because she's not ready for home yet. "My genetic database holds information on nearly 11 million species," Namtar explains to John. "It is simple for me to take a genetic sampling of a being and pinpoint the location of its origin." Lots of talk but that's all it really is. Zhaan has feelings about her map, and then begins to weep. "That's my home." It's pretty hard to watch. Almost earns it. But lest it get too hard, Rygel busts in: "You're gonna do this for me, too, right?" Worthless dialogue. Namtar's like, "Duh." He mentions that his maps would also include the ways to avoid any Peacekeeper jurisdictions along the way. "That is what you came here for, isn't it?" The worse yours. Namtar waves his hand and the solar map disappears; Rygel grunts.

Namtar talks about how awesome it is to be able to help them, which is a great way to identify the bad guys in the Uncharted Territories, and then Rygel brings up how broke-ass they are. Zhaan worries that he's going to ask for Moya, but Namtar pshaws: "My interest isn't in your ship, but in your ship's Pilot." And that's when Jacob would turn around and leave, but the whole thing about this episode is that Zhaan and Rygel and D'Argo are assholes this week for some reason. It's a great story, don't get me wrong, but you have to buy that the three of them will do anything to get home in order for the rest of the show to make sense, and I don't. Zhaan was a political prisoner -- and the only cast member to be justly jailed for her crimes -- and D'Argo was a victim of the chiffarobe, and Rygel has nothing to go back to, no matter what he says. So it's iffy. But you gotta buy it right now, for the season itself to make sense, so here it is: the three of them would do anything to get home. Things you don't think they would do. This episode should have been earlier in the season, much as I love it. "What do you want with him?" asks Aeryn, who loves Pilot more than anyone but John, for reasons I'm not going to go on and on about, and Namtar explains that his "research will be greatly enhanced by genetic material from such an extraordinary species." Like a sample, John assumes. Like Namtar took from the rest of them. Even shot-in-the-dark Crichton. "...I'm afraid I'm going to need a bit more than I asked of you." Specifically? AN ARM. An ARM of my darling Pilot. Which would be the, what, fourth time I told this episode to fuck off, even in this opening scene? But the D'Argo/Zhaan/Rygel contingent gets it, and they're fine with it, and they can all go to hell.

-- Page 4 --

Commercials, and then John and Aeryn are hanging out in a bar on the planet. "*11 million species*. 11 million, and he couldn't even at least narrow it down for me? I mean, sure, he can't pinpoint the exact location, but am I even in the neighborhood, here? He sure as hell pinpointed the others no problem." Aeryn shakes her head as if to say, "Yeah, wormholes, and also what are you bitching about? Because you have a home to go home to." John notes that, beyond the sourness, she didn't even let him poke her eyeball. "Have you forgotten? You and the others are trying to get home avoiding Peacekeeper territories. My home *is* Peacekeeper territories, it's just that I can't ever go back there." All caught up. Hurt enough? "Ever." Ah, there we go.

Aeryn goes wandering; John follows, reminding her about the whole PILOT'S ARM thing. Which, this is again a great episode, but no. This should have been the second episode, the one that said, "You do not even fucking know." But we're already halfway through Zhaan's depressing arc and one-third through D'Argo's and this is not the time to say, "You thought you knew but you didnâ™t," when in fact we are the ones that *did* know, and the show itself is wrong. Whatever, I love this episode for reasons that have nothing to do with the aliens onboard, it has just always struck me as stupid. Even though the final scene is awesomely heartbreaking. "Unless Pilot volunteers one of his arms, we're all gonna be blasting out of here together in about one hour..." He adjusts "hour" to "arn," but you know what? My microbes are working fine, which is why you won't see an "arn" or a "microt" in these recaps unless absolutely necessary. I already love the show, I don't need to be convinced that it's awesome. Especially if that shit is on a 1:1. Bless the rains down in Africa; I don't have the time. "You saw the looks on the other's faces. What makes you think that they're going to wait for Pilot to volunteer anything?" asks Aeryn. She does not add, "...other than the previous eight episodes, in which we worked toward a dÃ©tente that worked on an emotional and vulnerable family level?"

Although in terms of proving Zhaan's now an asshole, which I've tried to do for you, I guess it works. I just think this storyline is better than all of them, collectively and individually. And we cut to them. Zhaan. D'Argo. Even Rygel. Wrestling with Pilot. And I don't wanna talk about it, because it's hurtful to look at and even sadder to think about. And Pilot, of course, tells them to go suck a dick, and they explain to him rationally and sweetly -- Zhaan taking point, mind you -- why this is a necessity. "Think about somebody else for a change," says Rygel, which is the only in-character bit of this horrible scene. "I will help ease your pain," offers Zhaan, and then she orders D'Argo, Qualta at the ready, to make the cut.

-- Page 5 --

And he does.

It's not that it's wrong, or doesn't line up storywise. I buy it. That's the sucky part, because you buy it and you don't... It's that I love them too much to watch it. There's a difference. I would have liked to know these things going in. That's all. I'm sorry, but that's all. It'll grow back. I just want to know the kind of people I'll be working with, and Pilot gets denied that knowledge [well fucking too often](#) for comfort.

Oh, look! Pilot's fucking arm. On a table in Namtar's lab. *His arm*. I've only got two and mine don't grow back, so maybe I'm being gay about this, but mostly everybody on this show can go to hell. "We have upheld our end of the bargain, Namtar." Namtar agrees and tells the assholes that he'll have to take a second to get all the maps onto a crystal for them. Zhaan and D'Argo exit after giving him some shade about just how long, and then Namtar yaks at his assistant Kornata: "Let us hope the Pilot DNA shows better results." And we see another Pilot, deformed, broken, two heads. Two heads, crushed together, mutated, screaming. Chained. I hate to see anything chained.

Velorek: Look up. What do you see?

Pilot: The stars!

Velorek: That's what I offer you. The stars.

Pilot: I dream of nothing else.

Fuck absolutely everyone right now.

Except the DRDs, who are cauterizing Pilot's wound. His missing arm. After all we know about [what it takes](#) to get the job done, the only job that ever mattered to a Pilot, to get that done, against every nerve and every single sense of pain. In order to reach the stars, and hurt every fucking second of the day, knowing that you were getting the job done. To know that he's doing a job that he gave his soul to perform, to take all that sensation and intuition and use it to get the job done. To take his purpose -- like Aeryn -- and get it done with something missing. We're the only ones who know how hard that is; us and Aeryn. And we're a soldier down, through no sin of his own. It's not that he's hurting, he was already hurting: it's that he's less useful to Moya. Can you imagine? Don't. Don't even try, it's too ugly. They take something glorious and they make it a broken mockery. They take pain and they add pain and uselessness, and all the while they say, "This is necessary. This is necessary *for us*." Not even the Peacekeepers. Not even the fucking Peacekeepers.

-- Page 6 --

"Thank you. You are finished."

"I *said* you are *finished*," says my Pilot, well-fucking-Aeryn's my Pilot, and the DRDs scuttle away. And to John, jaw hanging open, sad and bewildered and out of his depth: "Don't concern yourself, Crichton. I will be fine. My species has superior regenerative abilities." And John wonders at his calm. "I didn't exactly *let* them: they have the opportunity to go home. The drive is very strong." John calls an outrageous amount of bullshit, as he should. "When one of my species is bonded to a leviathan, we give our lives to the service of others. Ship first -- then those who travel aboard her." *No matter what those aboard do to you?* That he would scream, and destroy. That he would fight back. That he would use his abilities on his own behalf. He is in charge of Moya; he is in charge of the world, everything in the world, and he does nothing. He's already home, and the fact that he's figured out that none of them have is that *so are they*. This is his purpose, and hers. He connects them to the universe; he is everything, the voice of Moya, and he does nothing. Heaven on a street corner. A simple man, everything golden, our connection to Moya which is everything, nailed to a cross of wood. The best of us, the best *in* us, done the ugliest disrespect. You don't have to be Christian for that to hurt, but can you doubt his grace? And this his response:

"My species is incapable of spaceflight on our own. If we wish to journey beyond our home planet, this is the tradeoff we make for the chance to see the galaxy. I consider it a perfectly equitable arrangement."

Elsewhere, Aeryn waits. For Zhaan and D'Argo, Aeryn waits. With a gun, not yet drawn. "Do you have something to say to us?" asks D'Argo. "The decision was a hard one," says Zhaan, but really she's asking. "Our actions, even harder. But it is done." She complains that Pilot -- her brother, her spirit -- was defenseless. And he is, just as is Moya. "Compassion? From a Peacekeeper?" D'Argo scoffs. (Straight to hell.) "For a *comrade*. You attacked one of your own. Would you do the same to the rest of us?" And I have to respect D'Argo here, as ugly as it is: "Of course." The only honesty there is, now that suddenly we can do these things to our brothers. "Well, you have your maps now. What makes you think you can just take this ship wherever you want to go?" Seriously. [We went through this with the TARDIS](#). The best way to make the



TARDIS suddenly stop working is to spit on God and on everything. "These maps are precisely what we've been longing for," whines Zhaan. "Our way home." Aeryn complains weakly that Pilot won't help, now that they've done this. To him; to her. To us. To Moya. "Pilot is a servicer," says young D'Argo. "He'll get over it, I'll see to it." And to be fair, he will. Pilot will forgive them well before I will. And Zhaan already so high up on my shit list: "I know what is troubling you, my dear. You'll never find your way home. But please, do not deny us all our chance to find our own." And Aeryn exits, because what do you say to that? What answer does brotherhood have for that? Only Crichton and the rain.

-- Page 7 --

John stares out a window; Aeryn enters: "They're getting their maps." John's been getting fucking drunk, which is absolutely the only way you can watch this happen and not turn off the TV. The only way this makes sense is if you're drunk or crazy, and in John's time he'll resort to both. "Pilot says he's going to be okay. *It's only one of his arms -- hell, he's got four.*" Which makes John and Aeryn the "odd men out." How odd, to care. To see this most gorgeous sign of our intimacy with Moya shit on so casually. "That means they're going home, and we're not." And they're fucking welcome to it. John and Aeryn are going somewhere better. Aeryn turns to leave, because this is only judgment and not a plan. What Aeryn needs is a plan to save someone she loves: several concepts we're not ready for. "Even with the maps it's still going to take them some time to make the trips," John offers to her back. "And then it's just you and me," she realizes.

"I'm not entirely useless here, you know," John complains. "I happen to be learning." She grabs his hooch and begins to drink. "Aeryn, what's the matter?" They're all going home. And someday, he will, too. Don't make wishes; [don't even imagine it](#). Don't make wishes. He drunkenly chuckles: "*If I ever find a way home, yeah.*" If the credits come true, instead of becoming more and more true. "I was born a Peacekeeper soldier. I've always been one among many. A member of a division, platoon, a unit, a team. I've never been on my own, John. Never been alone. Ever." But you could be more, and we know this because you hurt for Pilot. Not because he's in your regiment, but because he's in your heart. Because what's been done to him resonates across the show like Titania and Oberon: storms, and fire, and the nine men's morris all full of shit. Because they have disturbed in their darkness the natural order of things. "Me, on a planet full of billions of you?" (And again: show me to this planet of Crichtons and I will show you a man ready to go the fucking distance. In the meantime, we drink and we dream and we work on fucking stamina.)

D'Argo comes upon Rygel tossing crap out of his cell. Not that it ever meant anything but now it means nothing. "When I return home and reclaim my birthright, offal such as this will no longer be allowed to offend my sight." Things he's stolen, things he's hoarded. In this time of nothing, we can't even hold tight to Rygel's hoarding. Wishes and the things on the other side of wishes. And were these food cubes, D'Argo asks, in his possession...when we were out of food for nearly two weekends?" Guess that's weeks. Guess without Chiana's self-important lie of sexual freedom they had to do without. The evil inside. "You have not reclaimed your birthright yet, little man," D'Argo claims. As though this won't work out beautifully. As though something earned by horror couldn't possibly go wrong.

-- Page 8 --

Namtar's lab: "This is still not right!" Kornata, his assistant, begs him to chill. "Your anger... Release me. Please." As though this is science and not another kind of war. "There is someone to see you," she offers. Someone else, again, in sacrifice, in the pursuit of safety. Aeryn enters, willing lamb to Namtar's science. "I was here earlier. I wish to participate in your...research." And as she sits in his awful chair, on the horizon -- the *aurora* -- of a new chance, he asks what made for the change in her outlook. "I know that there are other Sebacean colonies beyond the known territories. I want you to find me one where I..." And Namtar knows, for it's his sin too: "Fit in? We will look for it together." He pokes her fucking eyeball with his fucking needle. How can she not know? "It's burning," she says. Only for a moment. Something flares, something different, a purple kind of science there in the singularity that says we're getting to the meat of this. The only one who cried for Pilot pays the price. "When will I know the result?" And, oh: "It won't be long at all." And so it won't. Second soldier down.

D'Argo places Namtar's crystal on the strategy table in command. It means *RatMan*, for reasons that will become obvious, because the show is an investigation of the morality of science, first and foremost. But, because I'm obnoxious, here's another Sumerian legend: Namtar was the god of disease, of pestilence. He commanded sixty/all diseases, demons for every single part of the body, heart and soul and mind, and he was supplicated for the prevention of illness. In this way, before health insurance, he represented fate, making him a major god, a son of Bā'ā. And they followed his instructions to the letter, for he had power over the other gods. He was the messenger of Ereshkigal, with whom we've dealt before and will do again. Then in Tibet, a true story of what happens when the PKs take their jobs too seriously, a "Namtar" is a hagiography, like a saint's bio, but the word itself means "complete liberation," and it arrived at this meaning because of the way it told the stories of yogis who attained enlightenment. Sound like anybody we know? Sound like *everybody on the show*, cruelty or no? (Even unto this: namtars *don't necessarily follow strict chronology*, by definition, but rather "function as a learning example, that hits the high points of the yogi's spiritual life.") And in this way John becomes more, and Aeryn becomes -- watch -- more, and we become more, in watching and thinking. And loving. Loving them, and us, and you and me, and not taking regular shits on Pilot. Basically.

-- Page 9 --

I do like this episode, don't I? And not the least because of the failures: "I, of course, will return home first," announces Rygel. D'Argo grumbles. "I bartered for the coordinates to this asteroid," Rygel lays it out, "I made the first contact with Namtar, I struck the deal. I go home first." And who steps in but that paragon of unselfishness, that shell of a woman that carries within it all the beauty of Moya and more? "D'Argo and I have already spoken," explains Zhaan, as though it is self-evident. "Whoever's home is the closest, *that* is where we will travel to first." How about all of you proceed directly to hell instead? Home isn't even what you want. It's not planets you miss, it's people. *We have Aeryn here*. And John, and Moya, and Pilot. "You two have spoken?" Rygel paranoids. "Without consulting me? What am I, chopped mellet?" And Zhaan, the higher self to which we all aspire: "Of course not. I can stomach chopped mellet." I

didn't put her there; she did that herself. All the farther to fall. "Blue-assed bitch," Rygel mutters awesomely, and she begs his pardon: "*What* did you call me?" You heard him. "A blue-assed bitch!" John smacks him, because come on. He asks if they're paying attention to the coordinates flying across the screen, and D says the inevitable: "We don't have to get all this. Moya is." Oh, is she? Pilot: "...Moya isn't." One hundred spacebucks across PayPal on delivery of that line. Fucking right she isnâ™t.

Everybody turns to Pilot on the clamshell. Zhaan: "Pilot, how are you?" Suck it, Blue. Not having you this week. "Yotz with pleasantries," says Rygel. "What do you mean Moya isn't assimilating the data? Is that her doing, or yours?" Zhaan tries to access Moya as Pilot admits that it's not him fucking with them. As he should. "Pilot is right," says Zhaan from her console. "The data is being processed directly by Moya but there is too much." D'Argo bitches and Pilot tells him to fuck off: "*Moya* can do nothing about it. It appears your crystal is useless. Lucky for you, you didn't trade anything of *real* value to get it." Ouch. A little cheap, but ouch. Zhaan realizes that they can access only one map -- but even that at the price of the other two. Good. "Well," Rygel decides, they'll "just go to Namtar and ask for three individual crystals." D'Argo brings up that he'll ask for more if they ask him for more. I hope he chops all their shit off. Slowly. "If he should ask for it," asks Pilot, "What *body* part you willing to offer, Your Eminence?" (Body and mind; only together does Pilot's skill make sense. Only with both intact can the intuition work its magic.) Rather than answering this apposite and important -- not to say bitchy -- question, Rygel fully scoffs and takes off with the crystal, zooming out the room on his Jazzy. It's obvious where I stand here, but that was awesome. Zhaan and D'Argo run off chasing him, and hopefully the three of them fall in a very deep hole and get a chance to think about what fucking assholes they are.

-- Page 10 --

Shit! This is *The Giving Tree*! That's all this shit is! If Moya is everything, the world and everything outside, and all she wants to do is be a good mother, to us and to them, then that makes her God or better. Which makes Pilot an angel, *aggelos*, messenger. And you shit on him. The best possible. The voice of God. The only way home, the only thing that loves you. The real home. I go on and on but think about why. He loves Aeryn and Aeryn loves him. And if he's the only real home you have, the voice of God, and Aeryn's the star that you steer by...I get so angry. I'm sorry. They are good people. I love them, you know I do. But you don't spit on God. That's like the only thing I'm asking for: recognize God when you see her, and don't take a dump on it at that point. How fucking hard is that?

Aeryn wanders, breathing heavy, vision blurring, voices all around. And who comes looking but John? Who but John knows that the only things you need to touch the real shit are Aeryn and Pilot? (Or Rygel, or Zhaan, or D'Argo, or even fucking Stark.) Who but John would know we're entering the next phase of her tutorial? "Listen, there's some major crap going down here." She begs him to be quiet; his voice continues to ricochet. "The map thing -- Namtar's magic crystal? -- Well, Larry, Curly and Moe just found out that they can only use one of the maps. Two of 'em ain't going nowhere. I tell you, it's like a regular family feud up there." Or whatever the opposite of "family" could be called. (Also "family.") He notices her sweating: "This isn't a Sebacean heat

thing, is it?" No, Aeryn assures him very fucking realistically, this is not "a Sebacean thing." He demands to know what's going on: "Is this something new? Or is this just your usual PMS. Peacekeeper Military Shit." And with that, as women have been doing rightfully since the phrase -- whatever the anagram behind -- was invented, Aeryn tells him to fuck himself, and takes off. (Listen and learn, boys.)

Rygel floats around his quarters, giggling and taunting D'Argo, who has just come looking for the crystal that's tearing them apart. "It's no use, Luxan! The crystal is well-hidden and will remain so until you and Zhaan are ready to listen to reason." Which D'Argo rightly defines as "when we return you to Hyneria." Yes. D'Argo threatens to find the crystal himself; Rygel promises he has "places...that even the Peacekeepers' scent hounds couldn't detect." Barf. Come on, you know what he's talking about, D. D'Argo offers to fight in Rygel's attempt to regain his throne, once home, if he'll side against Zhaan. "Imagine returning to your palace with a whole contingent of Luxan warriors at your command." D'Argo promises him that, whatever his crime, it won't interfere with this army. Rygel calls D'Argo's obvious plan to fuck him over a "Luxan trait," even as he's dodging D's attempt to smash him. Rygel pleads again for actual "reason" and D'Argo locks him in his cell. "Stay in there with your crystal as long as you wish -- until you starve. You forget, Your Rectal Eminence, you've been doing some housekeeping." He grabs one of the food cubes that Rygel was throwing out before, and takes a bite in Rygel's face, crumbling the rest.

-- Page 11 --

Aeryn, walking toward Namtar's, lifts her shirt to reveal some shiny Pilot skin on her abdomen. Maybe some organs. She sees Namtar and grabs his arm, twisting it behind him. "You are hurting me, my dear," he hums. So beautiful. She says it's good that he's hurting, and he CREEPILY AGREES. "I have temporarily changed my nerve receptors from pain to pleasure." See, I can deal with the S&M gear but once you start in on that shit I lose interest. "This is not like what you did to the others," Aeryn persists, and he gives a sassy and insincere "Oops." She beats him, he loves it, it's gross. "You are in the latter part of phase one, I suspect," he muses. Of what? "I don't want to ruin the surprise."

Zhaan and D'Argo make some stupid deal about fucking over Rygel. Which: (a) we get it, (b) like that's not always going to be Plan A, and (c) right to hell, all of them. "Rygel has been a very useful ally in the past, but now he is enemy," says stupid Zhaan. "You and I must remain strong, no matter what it takes. And unified," says stupid D'Argo. They are unequivocal in this agreement which is neither unequivocal or an agreement, and which is in fact only and always categorically: retarded.

"Yes, Officer Sun?" smiles Pilot. She asks if he's in pain. "Nominal. I will be fine. There is clearly something wrong," he says. Worrying about her. About Aeryn. She says, PK Techly, that it's the DRDs bothering her. "Everywhere. Over this entire ship. But it's not just the DRDs, it's the ship's power generator, the hydraulic fluids..." Pilot understands: "You hear all that?" Not so much *hear* it, she says. He asks further: are you my sister? Do you know the pain of thought when thought is much too slow? She holds up her hand, the claw that is beginning there. The Pilot's hand, and notice it's the hand first. Signs on her body; usefulness in the hands. Hands -- and arms -- are the way we speak to the world; the way we change her. Third soldier down. He gasps.

"It's not so much the noises as my own thoughts" she tries to explain yet again. "It's like they're all happening at the same time."

John comes in ebullient, telling Aeryn he wants to take her down to the planet -- Hi Pilot, he says, as though these two apocalypses aren't linked as tight as twisting DNA -- to find out what's wrong. "Maybe this Namtar guy..." Um, fucking no. "Dammit, Aeryn, I'm trying to help..." Not this time, not this time is she shaking him off because she's too strong. She's just telling the truth: science doesn't win this time. He grabs her arm and sees the evidence as she's twisting away; her stomach is blue, tubes and organs sticking out. More vulnerable than vulnerable. "It's Namtar. He took some of Pilot's DNA and he..." John's stuck on how. "I went back there. I wanted him to find me a place where I could belong. I didn't want to get left behind," she says. "I'm so scared," she says. The cost of that. I love her so much. From "[Family would end me quickly](#)" to this. She becomes more. Maybe in Sebacean there's a tense for gerundial, in opposition to the current; in this case it doesn't matter. The microbes are right: "I'm so scared," she says. "A place I could belong," she says. "I didn't want to get left behind," she says. "I'm so scared." In the strangest, scariest places she becomes more. As we do.

-- Page 12 --

Rygel, like Aeryn, strains for that sustenance just outside his reach, as Zhaan occasions to be walking by. She stoops to what we might laughingly, not knowing Blue, call *his level*. "Ah, Rygel. What a surprise. I see you're having something to eat. Is that your third helping, or your fourth?" He plays the Dominar card he always plays, saying that going the fuck home makes you hungry. He's so awesome. "You know, Rygel, there's no reason why you and I should be at odds with each other," says Zhaan. As she *holds a food cube just out of his reach*. I don't want to know these things about them, because they're true about me and they're true about you: at the end of the day you're Rygel and I'm Rygel and we always play the fucking Rygel game at the end of the day, and I hate you, and I hate me. "You know," she sleazes, still so sexy and so beautiful, "D'Argo will leave you here to starve." Just him? She grabs his wrist, reaching out: "You know, Delvian Pa'us such as myself are...are open to all manner of experience." She strokes his mustache; heads lower. Turns the sweetness of D'Argo on Rest Day into sour sickness. Crackers don't matter. Except when they do. Except on a day like today: "O, methinks, how slow this old moon wanes! She lingers my desires, like to a step-dame or a dowager, long withering out a young man's revenue." When the whole world's gone crazy, because you cut the hand that feeds you, leads you, loves you without asking anything in return. Always hated that play. I prefer the natural order of things.

"I'm not saying anything. I believe talk is...overrated as a means of connection between two consenting beings." He explains that he's not a "*body breeder*," and don't we just know what he means. (Also: "*body*." The concepts gets an overhaul this week.) "I mean, well, I'm not made that way." But he does understand pleasure -- it's his role in the journey. Pleasure, the body; Zhaan turns even this holy role into sour sickness: "I know the Hynerian earbrow is very sensitive. *I can be very gentle*," she whispers. "*This can be a very remarkable journey for you*." I don't want to know these things. Palpating his pleasure organ, she asks for the crystal; grunting sourly, he wakes from the dream of his body, because Rygel can be fantastic: "Safely hidden,

where it will remain. You honestly think that I could find you appealing? I mean, you're so...*blue!*" Don't talk to the body about pleasure, from your parapet. Know your role and slow your roll, Blue. "If D'Argo and I don't get that crystal, you *will* starve." And my man Rygel tells her that's a long time coming, and she can shove it. And she bloody well can, as far as blue can reach. I hate this episode; I don't want to see this stuff.

-- Page 13 --

John leads Aeryn back into the bar, hands over too-sensitive ears, crowd alive: "C'mon, we're gonna get some answers." He fights science with science: "No, no. Remember what Pilot said about the noise, about your thoughts? String them. Separate them in your mind." It's just a field strategy exercise, only the enemy isn't trying to kill you, it's trying to become you. He takes her by the hand -- that tiny strong hand -- and leads her inside. "Easy for him to say. He's been doing it all his life." She sways, threatens to drop. "I'm losing it, John. I'm completely losing it." Consider please this woman; what she just said. Being more only ever hurts. "Answers coming up. Come on." They come upon Namtar's assistant Kornata. "You must let me past," she screeches, and goes on screeching. "What's wrong with you? With all of you?" Same stuff. Namtar enters and says hello. "Whatever you've done to her," says John, panicking, on the other side now of [Maldis's wall](#), all alone with it even when she's in his arms, "Namtar, it wasn't part of our deal!" Deal? "A deal connotes reaching some point of equality. I'm afraid there's never been anything equal about us." He asks Aeryn how she's progressing. She's only ever been what people made of her. Not so John, who attacks; with a wave of Namtar's hand John flies across the bar; with another Aeryn approaches, and he touches her long, white neck with his beautiful fingers. "You're coming along wonderfully. All of these physical affectations are superfluous. I assume though that you are also developing the heightened perceptions and multi-tasking capability?" Bad science, his crib and berth; Aeryn begs him to stop it. "You don't know what you're asking. You, my dear, are making a phenomenal contribution to the approach of sentient life towards perfection...and you want me to stop it?" Only if perfection is ugly; it never is. Aeryn draws her gun. John begs her to think: Namtar's the only one who can help her. She shoots anyway, because she is awesome and because she is not. Namtar congratulates her on her awesome gun and regenerates. Perfection. John gets tossed again, this time against something hard, and he goes quiet. Namtar leads Aeryn away. Speaking of awesome and not, of those both fearfully and wonderfully made, Zhaan and D'Argo approach Rygel's cell. "D'Argo and I have spoken. We realize all this infighting is serving us nothing, except to keep us frozen in orbit around this asteroid." D'Argo stammers and acknowledges that Rygel's ultimately in charge of the crystal, for now. "So we agree to take you home to Hyneria," Zhaan pledges. "We'll find our own way home from there." But where is Rygel? A lump under the covers proves to be nothing, as D'Argo shouts, "He did not hear our offer and I hereby rescind it!" Straight to hell, all of you. The cell door shuts, and Rygel chuckles outside. "You really think that I could spend all those cycles locked up in one of these cells and not have a secret means of sneaking in and out as I please?" He takes off, leaving them to suck it; they beg nonetheless. Rygel's like my hero right now, even though he's no better than they are.

-- Page 14 --



Kornata lays her hand on John's chest where he lies in the bar, unconscious. "Your wound is shallow, you'll be fine. Leave this place now, while you still can." She bounces, John follows, explaining that he's going to help Aeryn. Obviously. She doesn't get it. "You've gotta help me help her!" Kornata explains that Namtar's need for Aeryn is too great: "He wants to isolate your Pilot's multi-tasking capability through Aeryn; he'll do anything to get it." Because it's an ability he doesn't possess, yet. Meaning, John realizes, that Namtar's only ever grafting other species' traits onto himself. Another vampire. And further, John realizes that it wasn't Namtar that created the lab: it was Kornata. "I was the project leader. These were my research team: facility employees. We were working on theories of quantum genetics, on isolating...identifying the origins of intellect, the essentials of thought itself." That word: *Isolating*. The way even she, inside the story, shrinks from it. Isolated thought is no thought at all. "And Namtar started to use your discoveries on himself?" Kornata increased his "intellect." At first. "Then when he became smart enough, he began doing it on his own. He was a test subject." Bad science. RatMan. "He was one of my laboratory creatures. He drew genetic material from all the species I had catalogued. He increased his physical size. He gave himself the best traits of lifeforms from a thousand different worlds." And now Aeryn is his rat. "He used us all," Kornata whines. And is there anything we can do? "He controls my lab, all my equipment. If I'm away for more than an hour, he comes looking for me. He knows that I am the only one..." But, John shakes her, is there a way?

Aeryn hides in an alcove off the lab, her voice echoing: "Is it necessary to reduce me fully to the final stage?" It always is. Call it Harvey, call it Talyn John: it's only worth something once you lose it. "You are in no way being diminished," says the Rat. "You are being given a gift, you are experiencing a level of intellectual processing few beings ever approach." For what? "I feel what you describe, but...I am slipping away. I feel that, too." And so she will. Good line for the Rat here: "You must be willing to push off from the riskless shore in order to reach heady new lands." To look upward. It only hurts from this side, and that's the truth about apocalypse and that's the truth about being more. Especially and always for her. "But," she reasons, "As soon as my *body* reaches the saturation point, you will take the DNA features you desire and discard the rest." But it's not her body, it's her mind that scares her. He says it's going to be awesome and gives her a cup of something; a Pilot's claw (again, note) reaches out for it. And she's his, and that's all it takes. Princess doesn't suit her, does it?

-- Page 15 --

Rygel hums and plays with the crystal on a console in command as D'Argo picks the cell's lock. Zhaan and D'Argo grumble about getting the cell door open. Worthless bastards.

"Pilot," says John, in Pilot's place, "This is Kornata. She's here to help Aeryn." Kornata pronounces Pilot *magnificent*, and we breathe a sigh of relief: once somebody says it, everyone will be okay. Just believe. "Pilot, we don't have a lot of time. In fact, we have no time. We need your assistance." And he offers it "without hesitation." As he would, as he does, as he always will. And Moya standing behind him, full of love and no hesitation, and in her gigantic heart and soul [only the desire to hear you singing](#); only the desire to hear your love for her. To see the stars and to love, and that's your entire life. Could you cut, bash, injure the glory in that? Could you live with yourself if you

did? It's not really rhetorical; they've got a lot on the line, or think they do, and I respect that.

Kornata talks a bunch of 'babble about how she's going to get Aeryn out of this pickle; Pilot multitasks this science without hesitation, though we know it's hard. John offers to help, and Pilot and Kornata shush him. "Crichton, I think you should know: Rygel has nearly finished reconfiguring the data on the cartographic crystal." Kornata lets slip that the crystal is not only worthless but a virus: "If you import the maps into the ship's data stores, it'll erase everything there." Welcome to the world of being an asshole, assholes. Here's a map worth exactly that much.

Where's the phone? I'll fucking call Crais myself. D'Argo finally opens the cell door and they run toward command, where John is wrestling with Rygel, who tries to bite. He takes it from Rygel and it shatters, worlds evaporating, gasps all around from the unforgivables. "What have you done?" hisses Zhaan, to John, still big enough to see enough of their perspective to know how painful that must have been: "It would have destroyed all of Moya's data. It was never meant to work." Pilot clamshells that "it's ready," and John leaves. We don't get to know what they're talking about because we're not worth it, just like Zhaan and D'Argo. It's an effective moment. John and Pilot are above and talking about things that we don't get to hear, because we're with Zhaan and D'Argo and Rygel.

Namtar mixes something and bitches at Kornata. "The final stage serum is nearly complete and I need your help!" John enters and makes some faces; Namtar tells him to bite it. "I don't have time for you now. I will need simply to kill you." Kornata works as John speaks: "I'm not here to attack you. I know that there's nothing I can do to you. I'm here to see Aeryn." Good science. "I'm afraid your friend Aeryn is no longer here, but...there is someone else you may be interested in meeting." He pulls the curtain on what Aeryn's become: "Step forward. Don't be modest." And she does. "John?" And how can Namtar do this to her? How can science set free from morality be so free still to horror? "Is that how you speak to someone who is fast approaching perfection?" John calls bullshit on that one; he's a scientist, he knows this. "You expect credit for using innocent lifeforms as specimens in your research? You of all people should understand the horror in that." Namtar's surprised that John knows about the rat part of the story. "What I didn't understand then is, all species are seeking perfection. That's what evolution is: the road towards perfection. How many generations of your species have lived and died to lead to you?" Just the right and most gorgeous amount, duh. "How many will die after you? All in the name of achieving a state of perfection." Or damn close. John's like, "The fuck you say?"

-- Page 16 --

"You don't think I understand you, do you? Oh, I understand. No, believe it or not, we've had men like you on my planet. Educated men, men of science and medicine." John name-drops Mengele in case you're not feeling this particular anvil; Namtar calls him a "visionary." John grabs him -- "He was a monster" -- and Kornata injects Namtar with the stuff she decanted on Moya. Everybody goes flying with mind powers. "For this betrayal, you will die!" Namtar says, and then quickly shrinks all [Gachnar](#) because both shrinking and rats are funny and what we need right now is funny. Kornata lifts RatNamTar and drops him in a cage.

Problem not actually solved: Aeryn, almost totally Pilot now, alive with words and sounds she can't understand, walks slowly out into the light. And drops, calling John's name. John prepares to inject her with more Kornata science, but Kornata stops him: "No. For her, it must be the eye." Aeryn nods, because as bad as things in the eye are -- and in the myths, there's *no* difference between the hand and the eye, Woden wears an eyepatch because it's easier to think about than a god without a hand -- that's better than this. He injects her and she begins to seize. John screams, louder and louder: "What have I done?" Only saved her life, Kornata says. And John holds Aeryn.

When you fall in love with the shapeshifter, you meet her at the crossroads, full moon at midnight, and you hold her. No matter what she becomes. Fire, snake, hateful killer, snarling horse, wild beast. Pilot. Murderous, schizophrenic mother's daughter. Treacherous, disappearing soldier's lover. Hands around your throat; hands around your heart. Even when it's killing you. Even when she's Harvey's lovely daughter, all in a coldsuit, hair gone long and straight and black as night, lover and enemy in one, you hold her. You hold her, because it's your love that draws her back; your love that's the star by which she steers herself home. And she'll do the same for you, because you're a shapeshifter too.

Even when it's killing her.

John, while I've been going on and on, has arranged some food cubes into a LOL face for her delight. She's confused. "It's a happy face," she says, back to Aeryn again. He tries to explain and gives up. She reaches for the sustenance that Moya provides and will always provide; she begins to eat. She admits that food still tastes funny. "What was the worst part?" He asks, beautiful eyes full of her. "Aeryn?"

-- Page 17 --

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## - Mothers & Fathers and Brothers & Suns -

-- Page 1 --

Look, it's Moya's belly! Yeah, it's that one. Biomechanoid spermatozoa. Abominations and horrible forthcoming progeny. Jothee, sure, but Talyn too. And yeah, I guess a conventional family needs a few of those. This is another light one, but at least it foregrounds D'Argo's stuff, which is rare, and leads nicely into next week, when his butt-sniffing weirdness with John finally chills out for awhile. I forgot how much D'Argo you get in the first season. I was reading today about how SciFi originally decreed at the beginning that the episodes all had to be stand-alones, which is interesting considering it immediately turned into the most continuity-heavy show this side of the universe. But the other interesting thing O'Bannon said was that in the beginning it was hard working with new writers because they kept trying to put John in the center of everything, giving orders and stuff, because he's the human and the male. I wonder if all these D'Argo episodes and all the weird mirroring that goes on between him and John (and Aeryn) isn't just the line of best fit for getting around that proclivity. Making D'Argo the unstable element in all these stories, even when he's actually the

most solid character, makes the rest of them look fucking normal. Not to mention (see next week) making John sensitive and out of his depth without being a pussy, which is maybe the trickiest thing about writing this show. Except it turns out this episode is actually about Aeryn and D'Argo, which is smart.

Aeryn is perched on John's shoulder doing tool things and sending shocks through them both as she works. There's a sex joke there but whatever, John's like, "You know, I could get you something to stand on," and Aeryn ignores that altogether, because who wouldn't? It's some kind of "Peacekeeper comms enhancer" she's dealing with, which was poorly installed: "Moya must have been called into service as prison transport before it was finished." *Called into service*, she says. Oh, Condi. D'Argo's sweeping Moya's systems and bitching, but Pilot is insistent. I bet he's calling in favors left and right this week. Pilot tells him to keep working until they find all the PK junk on board, and tells D'Argo he's spared him two DRDs. Which is not much, D'Argo whines. "How much longer do you expect this to take?" Pilot deems this a less-than-legit question, "Considering I have just stated I have no data on how many Peacekeeper devices may still be concealed." Also I'm down an arm, dick. Don't question me. "It will take as long as it takes."

-- Page 2 --

To John's complaint that they're in the middle of nowhere and this tech is pretty useless for the PKs, Aeryn snarxposits that Crais -- "You might have noticed" -- is determined to track them down no matter where they are. Okay, but you might *also* have noticed that he's, again, wicked crappy at it. It took an actual vampire sorcerer to provide him with even a tiny bit of a clue, and that's sad from every angle. Consider, instead, prolonged contact with the deltoids of Commander John Crichton; or, if you like, Aeryn Sun wrapped around your neck. Chills multiplying and whatnot. They're complaining but not really.

D'Argo finds some kind of Peacekeeper control panel, and he and Pilot do an extended remix of the scene from *Lethal Weapon III* that John was [telling Gilina all about](#), with extra interference on comms to make it extra-irritating for everyone concerned. "Which wire?" Not that one. "So this one?" No. Et cetera. Guess what? He pulls the wrong one -- a direct link to the propulsion unit -- and D'Argo gets electrocuted and goes all *Goonies* around in the insides of Moya.

Everybody runs around wondering where D'Argo is, and nobody knows where he is, and the DRDs are looking everywhere, and he was last seen bitching and moaning on tier twenty-one. D'Argo's in and out on comms, having found a PK device. Which he then kicks really hard, sending out the prenominate biomechanoid spermatozoa, which gets all over everything, as you know, and sends D'Argo sliding down the shaft again. John's not phallic, he's a teenager reaching for manhood; meanwhile, tentacle-faced D'Argo's slip-sliding all around Moya's insides covered in spaceship semen. I didn't write the episode but that's what we've got on our hands right now, so to speak, and there have been no credits yet. I guess it had to be either D'Argo or Aeryn, and D'Argo's the less-weird option, especially considering the role Aeryn will take in Talyn's creepy little Freudian worldview. "Pilot," John winces, "What tier is D'Argo on?" No tier at all. Meaning? D'Argo's floating about in space. Credits. Aeryn takes her Prowler out to retrieve frozen D'Argo from space, and she brings him into the bay. Zhaan suggests restarting his respiration, and our favorite Boy Scout

starts pounding hell of D'Argo's chest, to everybody's horror. "Hasn't he suffered enough?" asks Aeryn. Zhaan goes into overdrive: "Turn him! Turn him quick! Pulse is faint. Deep space internethermia." She explains that Luxans can handle space vacuum for like 15 minutes (Aeryn: "Maybe.") and then Moya starts freaking out and dipping in space, on top of everything else. "Come on big guy, come on. Give me one of those big nasty smelly breaths," John begs. Zhaan tells him to chill, and D'Argo takes a breath. Unfortunately, he is also completely out of it, calling Zhaan "Lo'Laan" and gazing at her lovingly. They ask about the PK device he found, but he's really trippy and not getting it, and then he passes out again. Moya wigs some more and John asks what's going on. "Something is wrong?" asks Pilot, and Aeryn starts to realize that Pilot's out of it too. So if Moya, Pilot, and D'Argo are all simultaneously losing it, that means our fate is up to Aeryn and Zhaan, basically. Which is just so scary. Pilot vaguely says he's "Working on it," as far as Moya's freakout, and Zhaan picks some "debris" off D'Argo. John and Aeryn take off for tier twenty-one, leaving Zhaan to deal with D'Argo's recovery.

-- Page 3 --

Aeryn and Crichton in the corridors, listening to Pilot fugue out, and now also the DRDs are freaking out and not responding to Pilot's requests to go help them. "Whatever is affecting Moya is bugging Pilot too," John finally realizes, and posits that something's going on with Pilot and Moya's "symbiotic fusion." "Pilot's tendrils run all through this ship." He thinks maybe they both got hit by something, and exposits awkwardly: "Man, I am never going to get used to walking around inside a living ship." Aeryn asks if they don't have similar things on Urp, and John mentions Jonah and the Whale (a story Rygel and Zhaan might find interesting) before comparing the situation to a horse and its rider. Horses? "Not as large as or as sophisticated as Moya here but kinda similar, loyal and intelligent." Which, Aeryn snorts hypocritically, "you capture and make work for you." John counters that we love our horses too, and Aeryn says: "You love what you enslave?" I don't even have time for you right now, Officer Sun. Zip it if that's the best you can do.

John smells a smell, stale air, and notices two DRDs busily filling up the hole D'Argo kicked in the wall. "I don't read any of the DRDs in that section," Pilot murmurs weirdly, and Aeryn reiterates that they actually are there. Then a DRD shoots some glue at her boot, which causes her to fall down, and then it glues her hand to the deck and prepares to shoot glue at her face. John deals with it. I don't know when you get over seeing DRDs get their antennae and nozzles and whatnot snapped off, but it's way less troubling when they're cocking back to shoot Aeryn in the face. So in addition to D'Argo completely losing it, you've got Pilot dropping all ability to deal, Moya randomly freaking out, and DRDs gone rogue. Last time this stuff happened, [somebody was having a baby](#). If I have to watch Rygel crawl up another alien's ovipositor I will...I don't know. Something dreadful. Times twenty if Aeryn gets hit in the body yet again, so soon after last week.

Zhaan's in her apothecary, noting that her scanner is felled, when John comes in with things stuck to him: Aeryn's boot, the poor DRD's nozzle part. Aeryn is wiggling out because she's got DRD goo all over her, but Zhaan notices that they've also got "debris" on them. Zhaan reveals the not-yet-disgusting fact that D'Argo also ended up aspirating and ingesting some of the debris too. John wonders if maybe that's not part

of D'Argo's current weirdness, but Zhaan dismisses this. "The particles are biomechanoid." Aeryn spends this entire scene screeching about getting the glue off her, it's awesome. She manages to make Zhaan and John look like scientists, which is what they are, which is the point here. John wonders aloud how the debris from an explosion could have such uniform makeup. Go back and watch this episode from the beginning, because the most innocuous conversations become hysterically disgusting.

-- Page 4 --

John and Aeryn, getting washed up, posit that it's a virus left behind by the PKs, which...explains nothing, really, but makes sense because they've connected D'Argo's mental breakdown with Moya's. Aeryn wonders if it's not another passive weapon like the [Paddac Beacon](#), and they agree that this makes the most sense. John and Aeryn are sweet as they finish up the cleaning job, and John reiterates what they just decided was the thing going on. "But you are saying this virus is biomechanoid," says Aeryn. "That means it shouldn't affect Pilot or D'Argo." But, John points out, *something* is messing with them, and also they're breathing it in right now, if it's a virus.

Zhaan notes the staleness of the air in D'Argo's quarters as she brings him there to recuperate, and wonders if she can't help make the recovery easier. He chuckles lovingly. "Lo'Laan, you must not worry about me. You work way too hard. You are so beautiful I can only dream that I make you happy as you make me." Ignoring the fact that he's clearly calling her by somebody else's name, Zhaan smiles sweetly. "I am glad I can make you happy, sweet D'Argo, but I also want to make you well." If they didn't run around talking and talking about everything and ignoring everything in front of their faces, this episode would be five minutes long. I'm not really bothered by it, but it's another one where the stuff that actually happens has a vastly smaller mass than the actual plot, and that always bugs me. "I'm never more alive or happy as when I'm with you," says D'Argo. Red flag! Even Zhaan's like, "Thatâ™s a fishy thing to say to Zhaan." She asks what it is that he's seeing, when he looks at her. "I see my future. No matter what the others say, I see you and me together." Yikes. She's like, "Cut the bullshit, who's Lo'Laan?"

Aeryn and John are hungry, and they lunch on rotten food cubes as the DRDs scoot around the commissary floor, fixing each other and worrying. Aeryn spits out her rotten food cutely, and John checks the fridge, which is bad news. "Pilot, we have another systems malfunction to report." Pilot gets it together long enough to tell them it's not a malfunction: "I'm seeing...signs of intent." His voice is all over the map; Aeryn gets worried. "Intentional sabotage," Pilot says, and passes out. Pilot! Unconscious! Not in charge! So scary!

Zhaan and John are on the bridge, worrying; Aeryn is trying to comfort Pilot. Zhaan notifies everybody that Moya's compensating for Pilot's blackout by getting systems control back. Which would normally be troubling but the best option, except she's wiggling too. Aeryn panics about trying to revive Pilot, but confirms that he's still alive. "We'll do what we can for him," John assures her, "As soon as we get the ship stable. I'm getting a lot of peaks and valleys here." Zhaan points out that without Pilot, "Moya is out of control." She notes that Moya's showing major chemical surges, which plays nicely into John's whole incorrect "virus" theory. There's an elegant symmetry here to



the fact of this assumption that it's death, not life, that she's harboring; that this assumption is being made by the people inside her; that they're all inside Moya for the duration as they grow and change. That even though she's the womb for all of them, hurtling through space, she's not allowed to be going through this herself. I like Talyn not for himself but for the fact that he allows Moya to make these calls: to pull in upon herself and protect Talyn above her adult children. From this episode on, Moya becomes as much a character as anyone else. It was always the case, but Talyn gives her the ability to define herself against the plot itself, which makes her much more awesome. Not to mention recalling all that symbiosis/invasion stuff from "Exodus" -- and radically recontextualizing the mother-as-goddess archetype we first saw in that episode -- and the way the story takes Pilot out of the picture, Moya's voice and messenger, so that she becomes strange and frightening both as a character and as our environment. Less "living *ship*" and more "*living ship*." More than most, this episode does a good job of telling the whole story in a way that makes it a mystery: you have to rewind through the whole episode to figure out how it all fit together.

-- Page 5 --

Aeryn takes over for Pilot, acting on instinct of course, and for the first time is able to explain what she's doing, even as she's unable to explain how she knows how to do it. John and Zhaan wonder about how Aeryn and Pilot's DNA connection last week is still operating if, as Zhaan says, "That was all flushed out of her." Which, let's unpack that briefly, because (a) their connection isn't necessarily physical, and all the DNA stuff is just a way of making it biologically official, which is (b) pretty much sex, not to mention (c) of course Zhaan assumes that these kind of spiritual truths and infections can be "flushed" so easily, and (d) of course John sees the big picture: "Aeryn, whatever you're doing, just keep doing it." (Also, though, John understands that both Aeryn and Pilot, for him, are a way of interacting directly with the divine -- (b) again -- and that Aeryn and Pilot's connection is something you can't really parse out in words, because that's the opposite of what it is. And he has no business looking too closely at it.) But Zhaan exists in part to radicalize and problematize (and ultimately make transcendent) John's relationship with Aeryn, which means hauling these kinds of wordless truths back over the line to the science they share. Zhaan symbolizes John's ambivalence about Aeryn's (meaning his own, of course) warrior nature; when she's gone is when the love becomes real, without fear. Which is, admittedly, a lot to get out of like one sentence, but here's the thing: I'm terrified about recapping "Die Me, Dichotomy," so the more we get out of the way here, the less I'll have to talk about this stuff down the road.

Rygel "wanders" into D'Argo's chambers and starts going through his shit, because that's how Rygel goes. D'Argo wakes up and snorts at him, and Rygel starts lying immediately. "I know exactly what you're trying to do, Jothee. Come here, boy!" Rygel's like, "Boy?" but D'Argo won't be denied. "Now." Rygel tries to lie some more about his snurching, and D'Argo grabs him, beginning once again the Luxan Death Hug. I like how D'Argo's like this genie that they keep taking out of the bottle and then putting back, over and over again: "D'Argo's gone nuts! He's going to fuck you up! ...With hugs and giggles! Never mind!" It's a good description of the character, and of the horrors and wonders of the show, and I love that they do this over and over. D'Argo puts little Rygel down and kneels to smile in his face: "Now, what did I tell you

about going through other people's things?" Rygel is more interested in what the hell D'Argo's doing, and D'Argo does the lint-flick trick where you point to the chest and then bop the chin. This is awesome because it's the Dominar. Li'l Imaginary Jothee is sooo cute, because he makes D'Argo sooo cute. I miss Imaginary Jothee! Rygel tells D'Argo to fuck off and D'Argo...*tickles* him. "Jothee! You are *so big!*" The line reading is so adorable. Rygel snits, with five times the gravity he should be able to muster right now, "Oh, my size is never a matter of discussion."

-- Page 6 --

All that dignity, washed down the drain. Hysterical. D'Argo does what he can with this, from his side of the hallucination. "I think I know why you are so upset. You are old enough now to realize that we're outsiders here. You look different to the others, and they're treating you like a stranger." Heartbreaking -- but again, you don't know how much yet. Rygel agrees that D'Argo is "strange" right now, but D'Argo comforts him. "I know exactly how you feel. You know when your mother's family first saw me ["What about my mother?"] they despised me. So that's why we had to go away. ["Not far enough!"] We came to a place where no one could tell us what we thought or felt was wrong." The ignorance of Rygel in this scene is twice as awkwardly hammered in than it was with Zhaan, but I appreciate that he would be less likely to pick up on the way D'Argo's acting really off than she would. I don't know, it reads not entirely believable. Rygel shrieks that D'Argo is, in fact, "Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! Wrong!" and D'Argo commences ticking him some more. "Ah, I love you, son." Rygel finally realizes what's going on, and gasps out something, but D'Argo just says, "Yes, son, no matter what happens I will always love you." Aww. That's rough in about sixteen different ways, and I'm only talking about the positions Chiana knows. Never mind how obnoxious Jothee is on his own.

John and Zhaan are still doing tests and looking at Moya's blueprints. "Pilot's tendrils run all through this ship. He could have picked up the virus anywhere, from any tier." Zhaan sneezes -- again supporting the virus hypothesis even though that's been disproven by the biomechanoid thing -- and she complains again that the air is getting staler. I kind of like how John's so stuck on this virus idea, because it illustrates how strange this world still is to him. He's the only one that keeps trying to tie it back to the things he knows. "Hey Zhaan, can this ship function without Pilot?" Theoretically. "Moya is an independent living being, Pilot and the DRDs are just merely services in aid of her operations." Pragmatic. John asks about environmental, the lights and air -- the air and sun, the things he needs to live, and I can't help wondering if he's thinking back to the last time this happened too, and what happened to Aeryn Sun, and what she asked him to do.

"Those things are not here to keep Moya functioning, they're here for us. Pilot controlled those." John wonders, because clearly Psych 101 was not core curriculum, whether it's possible to communicate with Moya without going through Pilot. Other than psychosis, there's none. Aeryn notifies them that she's figured out that Pilot's blood is being nutrient-starved." Interesting. "It may not be the only reason why he's unconscious, but it's the only thing I can figure out for now." There's a good PK Tech Girl. Complete the thought: if Pilot's "tendrils" go all through the ship, and he's being starved, that stuff is going somewhere, right? And you've got a ground zero event on tier twenty-whatever. ...Nope. "The virus must be starving him, get him some

nutrients." Except, Zhaan realizes, it's not a virus. "This test just confirmed that the particles are not a distinct organism, like a virus. They are actually make up of Moya's genetic material. They are a part of Moya, they must be fragments from the explosion." But again, they're uniform in size. "John, they are a part of Moya," Zhaan says. We're still talking about genetic material, folks.

-- Page 7 --

The only thing better than John and Zhaan getting their science on is that Aeryn's a part of this conversation. You know who I don't hate *at all*? Joolushko Tunai Fenta Hovalis. I don't think I get to write a single recap with her in it, so I should say that right now while the train of thought is leading there: in the show's ongoing exegesis on scientific ethics, Jool's "kid genius" role in opposition to John's applied, practical science is a great barometer of how the show feels about science at any given time -- no less the way she finally leaves the ship, and the show. Jool is so fucking key, I love her. If Aeryn and Pilot represent the abstraction of scientific truth to wordless intuition, Jool is the concretization of science to the point of flaccid overintellectualizing same. And I should know from overintellectualizing shit. She's heartless, but not cold: it's just book learnin'. You bring in Zhaan and John as the engineers (and the Ilanics and Scorpius, of course, on the PK side) and you've got the whole fucking platter of scientific philosophy.

John remembers that D'Argo "saw some Peacekeeper something" just before things went nuts and realizes that must be the answer. Aeryn sticks a needle in a Pilot tendril somewhere -- murmuring to Pilot as she does so -- and the lights come back on. John checks in on Rygel and D'Argo. "I'm not sleeping," says a very pissy Rygel, from D'Argo's bed. "D'Argo tucked me in and went for a walk. He thinks I'm someone called Jothee." So, Zhaan, confirms, D'Argo's not with Rygel? "He went for a walk and he's looking for Lo'Laan." Which is what he called Zhaan earlier, John remembers, and then takes off to find him. The task list is very methodical in this episode: got the lights back on? Good, now worry about D'Argo.

John finds D'Argo deep in thought. "I feel...unsteady," says D'Argo. "I know a little while ago, you were floating in deep space in your street clothes. I know you are going through some stuff, but we're in deep guano here, bro. We need your help." D'Argo's unimpressed: "You need me, Macton?" (The number of PKs on my shit list is rather large, I grant you, but that name actually just caused me to make a fist when he said it.) "D'Argo, I'm not Macton. What was that name you called Zhaan? Was it Lo'Laan? Who is Lo'Laan?" D'Argo's insulted: "You may despise your sister for marrying me, Macton, but do not mock her by feigning to forget her name." John realizes D'Argo's talking about real people: "You were married?" D'Argo calls John "Crichton," having been shocked back to reality by the question. John nods. "It's me, and you're here on Moya." He tries to get more info about the blast, and D'Argo remembers only a "Peacekeeper shield...holding something back." Before John can get deeper on this, D'Argo backflips again to the dream, and attacks John. "Macton, you dare deny your own sister's name? You dare to dishonor her, even though she is dead!" He tosses John around like a ragdoll.

-- Page 8 --

D'Argo's doing the heavy lifting this week: his flipping back and forth between two realities describes the A and B plots in miniature. Two secrets coming to light, the

annunciation of two unholy children, the miscegenation that hits the PKs in their greatest horror, the guilt and shame in the way both D'Argo and Moya have been misused by the Peacekeepers. How much of this show is about breeding? Things with things, Sebaceans with Scarrans, humans with Sebaceans, Leviathans with war tech, Luxans with Sebaceans, violence with science, love with fear, more with less. It's about coming up against your opposite and Other, and finding a synthesis, and it turns out okay if you can do that, which is about half the time. Either you find the balance between your good and evil sides, *Zhaan*, or you self-destruct -- have you ever thought of setting Zhaan down next to Crais/Talyn and following their stories in tandem? Or Talyn and Aeryn? It really kind of makes everybody look better when you do that. One of the reasons I adore Scorpius so much, and why I can't really hate Talyn: every time somebody harnesses the energy and internal tension of their own impurity, no matter how badly or poorly it goes, it still takes something away from that Sebacean "purity" that has gone so rotten. Clean lies becoming dirty truth: the "more" that only looks scary from the BEFORE side. How much of this show is about physicalizing that internal synthesis? Ask [Katralla](#). Ask Aeryn, whose entire story started with just this: irreconcilable contamination, becoming more and less at once. How much of this show is about breeding? Ask Mele-On Grayza.

Aeryn is in Pilot's den, second-guessing herself: "I can't be certain of what I'm reading, what I'm doing." Down in the corridors, John tries to reassure her, confirming that D'Argo's still out of it, "short circuited," even as his flashlight is going wack. "Aeryn, we gotta be getting close to the source, there's some kind of emergency lighting in this section." He spots four DRDs aiming to misbehave: "Uh oh. Eyes." Aeryn's like, "Eyes?" Aeryn directs him toward a possible detour she thinks might head off on parallel passageways. "You *think*?" he whines. "Look, do you want to come up here and try to handle all of these thousands of controls?" He shakes his head. "I'm vectoring, I'm vectoring." Heh. He comes upon a whole clutch of DRDs, glowing scarily, advancing on him. They begin to shoot; he tries to back out and finds himself surrounded.

-- Page 9 --

"Aeryn, shut down the DRDs," John says, to which she of course replies that he's being ridiculous. "Do it!" And she does, immediately.

Bridge. Aeryn, Zhaan and John are sitting around the table, discussing Rygel and D'Argo. Zhaan: "D'Argo took his 'son' on an excursion." Aeryn frets about the DRDs -- "they're vital services, we need them operational" -- and John points out that "operational" is off the table for now. (That's the third time Moya and her immune system have been described as in "service," if you're counting. Which only bugs because of last week.) Zhaan, passive-aggressively to a certain extent, wonders aloud if the DRD weirdness is related to "what we've been calling" a virus, and John finally gives in. "No, you're right. It's not a virus, these guys are not biomechanoid. They're entirely mechanical; wires gears, servos. No way a virus would have any affect at all...they only do what someone tells them to do." Aeryn points out that Pilot's unconscious, but John says it's not Moya controlling them. "You're saying that Moya wanted these DRDs to try and kill you?" asks Aeryn, just as Zhaan realizes the DRDs are also the ones that shut down the environmentals. "Moya has an independent intellect, right?" says John. "Maybe the explosion that D'Argo was involved in short

circuited that -- maybe she consciously cut off Pilot's resources in order to prevent him from keeping us alive." So maybe Moya's trying to kill them. If she were a poet, and not a spaceship, those DRDs would be chopping their arms off. No poetry today, though.

Lest you think that we've gained any kind of respect for Moya and the things she's going through right now, we cut to John and Zhaan looking at Moya's blueprints and wondering about how to bypass her intellect altogether. And they're being *sneaky* about it, avoiding using her viewscreens and stuff. This is creepy and disrespectful: that beautiful shot of [the control collar coming off](#) should tell you that at least. But we're on the trail of yet another red herring, and they're fighting for their lives, so I don't think the vulgarity really makes them look bad, it's just generally gross. Zhaan finds it hard to believe that Moya doesn't know what they're planning. "How do you know about the few bacteria inside of you? No, you don't know until you get a symptom." Love isn't invasion, it's symbiosis. "My body carries no bacteria," Zhaan overshadows, as Aeryn comes in with more blueprints and asks what exactly they're planning. She points out the grossness, and it's less hypocritical and more transcendent, that she's the only one getting this: "But that would be like...like when Moya was still wearing the Peacekeeper control collar." Exactly. Zhaan's more worried about getting Moya's brain working again. "It may be the only way to save her," says John, as Moya dips in space again, "And us. I think the most direct access point would be in Pilot's chamber." He invites Aeryn to head to Pilot's chamber; she nods and leaves. John comms to Rygel, who's "getting a piggy-back ride," and asks him to ride D'Argo back up to command.

-- Page 10 --

D'Argo puts Rygel down softly: "You must hold still! We're up in the mountains and the air is very thin!" Rygel's like, "Mountains now. Crazy fucking freak." D'Argo chides him for "making things very difficult" for his "old man," and Zhaan and John enter Command. D'Argo only sees Lo'Laan. He kisses Zhaan: "The more I know you, the more I love you; the less I understand you. How could you give up everything to love someone like me?" What's not so fun is pretending that D'Argo's not crazy: he loves Rygel like a shitty little kid, he loves Zhaan like perfection. Like whatever Aeryn is to John. He distrusts John as the male in his cage. "Yes, sweet D'Argo. I do so love you too," smiles Zhaan. D'Argo pledges that he will never let her go, and she asks him, seriously, for help. "Anything! We are in no danger here. Not here, they aren't looking for us anymore. We're safe. You, me and Jothee." Even without knowing anything, you know enough to know that this is terribly sad. We've seen him angry and we've seen him horny and we've seen him sad. This love and joy and hope are so much harder to take. "We are not safe. Our ship..." D'Argo interrupts: "Our ship is gone. I destroyed it soon after we landed. There is no way they can trace us here." Which is where, Zhaan asks, but John interrupts: "D'Argo." It's a new voice. John pushes D'Argo harder than anybody else, because John understands D'Argo, in certain ways, better than anybody else onboard. He knows when to push, when to pound. When the blood's not running clear.

"What are you doing here? With her? You keep your hands off my sister!" Rygel's flummoxed by this new Crichton. I'm impressed and also quite sad. John spends way too much time trying on the Peacekeeper mask, especially in the first season. It's

such an unhealthy way to get this job done, this becoming more that he's gotta do, turning into his opposite, but I think he knows it, which is why he only does it for love. "You have nothing to say on this, Macton!" says D'Argo. "I have everything to say on it. I reject you and I reject your marriage." Note, please, that Moya dips in space now. "No, you think yourself worthy of her when you cower from her memory." The cost of that, the love in that. It's not that John's less than masculine, it's that he has little opportunity to show it off, when all he does is love. Thank god for D'Argo, who he gets to push and pound. "Her memory burns in my very soul," says D'Argo, getting vaguer. To Zhaan: "You...you're dead." John begs him to remember; not sure whom it's hurting more. "I don't want to," D'Argo pleads. "You must," in that voice again, "You must remember. Everything." D'Argo tosses John around some more, scaring Zhaan. Even broken, John begs him to remember. "You killed her! To keep her from me, you killed her!" Zhaan starts to put it together: Her own brother killed her. Peacekeeper purity.

-- Page 11 --

D'Argo turns to Rygel, firing heartbreak and exposition at a mighty and equal rate. "I never had the chance, you were so young I never had the chance to tell out why your mother and I went away from the world that we knew. Jothee, please understand, I had to send you away. I was charged with your mother's murder. Before they arrested me I got you to another planet, safely away to a place where I prayed Macton and others like him would never find you. I had no other choice, but I can't be sure you have remained safe until I see you again. I can't..." John says his name, once, and he responds: "Macton arrested me, he still had her dried blood on his hands." John realizes that Macton was, then, a Peacekeeper, and is horrified but not really surprised, and Zhaan finishes the puzzle: "If he was a Peacekeeper, then Lo'Laan was..."

Think of D'Argo and Aeryn, now. Perched on a tree, calling bullshit on each other. Running around in their roid rage gauntlets, calling each other cowards and worse. D'Argo always wanting to investigate, to attack, and Aeryn always wanting to run, both of them offended and irritated by turns. Think of D'Argo watching Aeryn die in the heat; D'Argo angrily explaining to the Ilanics that Aeryn is family. The work he's done that we didn't even see him do. D'Argo activates a chip and his family appears: a beautiful Sebacean woman holding a cute Luxan child. Lo'Laan and Jothee. "I remember it all." John asks again about the explosion. More knowledge, not less, and the blood runs clear.

Cut to Aeryn in Pilot's den, about to shut down Moya's higher functions: less knowledge, not more. This is vulgar. Zhaan hopes out loud that John can isolate the problem before they take this step. "Be careful, John. You may be going to right in where the particles are most concentrated." Not that they can do anything to him. Aeryn realizes she can't simply "shut down" Moya's intellect: "But I do have access, I can cut the connections." Permanently? She steps back from that. "This isn't my decision alone. If I do this, we all have to be a part of it." John gives the order, even as D'Argo's searching for the PK shield. Realizing the DRDs have already bricked over, he starts kicking holes in the wall. Aeryn starts to cut. John enters the shaft. D'Argo: "What do you see?" John sees infinity. "Then you're close either way." D'Argo talks him through it; John complains that he's running low on oxygen. Aeryn stops cutting: "I'm through the protective casing."



-- Page 12 --

John locates the Peacekeeper shield but Zhaan cautions him he can't go much further down before he runs out of cable. "Okay, I'm cutting now," says Aeryn, and Zhaan warns John that Aeryn is beginning to cut the connections. Everybody talks over and over each other: D'Argo and Zhaan trying to figure out what's going on with John, John beginning to figure out the secret. "I'm not sure, Zhaan how much do you know of Leviathan physiology? Do you know how they reproduce?" Zhaan immediately hops on board: "That's why the particles are biomechanoid." It's the "catalyst" for her pregnancy; she wasn't trying to kill them at all. "No, she's been trying to protect her baby." They say "catalyst" about a hundred times, and then forgotten Aeryn comes over comms to call in her situation: "I've almost got it. The higher functions are almost severed." Everybody screams at her to stop, over comms, which are crappy this week just like everything else on Moya, and it's nail-biting freaky. John orders Aeryn to stop and she finally complies -- again, without asking why. Peacekeepers! Zhaan: "We'll explain later, just put down the saw." Heh.

"Moya," says John, "I wish there was some way I could communicate to you, to let you know that whatever you're doing to nurse your baby, it's killing Pilot. And us." He realizes why the DRDs are freaking out. "The baby needs the DRDs, we're killing the baby. Aeryn, you've got to turn on the DRDs." Aeryn, fed up, asks what the hell is going on down there. "Turn back on the DRDs now!" He shouts; she does. It's not about following orders, it's about trust. The DRDs advance on John. "Moya, I don't know if you can hear me through the DRDs...hell, I don't even know if you can understand me without Pilot translating, but we would never hurt you or your baby. We're happy that you're having a child. But do we have to die so that your baby can live?" The DRDs chill out, and Zhaan comms that the atmospherics are back on. The DRDs back off as John wonders at the baby: "How big is that thing gonna grow?" Especially in comparison to his britches?

Zhaan compliments Pilot on being "up and back on your feet," which colloquialism apparently translates, since John laughs about how Pilot doesn't really have feet to be back on, exactly. Pilot thanks her for her concern. "Here's what I don't understand," says John. "How could Moya do this without your permission?" Pilot shrugs it off, as always: "I'm here to serve her, she may do whatever she feels is necessary to for her survival ... now, I suppose, that extends to her offspring as well. To nourish the fetus through the very tenuous period right after conception, Moya needed to re-route a few resources." And the "service" issue comes back around: speaking as Aeryn or Zhaan, it's a beast-of-burden issue. "Droid work." Moya and Pilot in service of their crew. But as usual, only Pilot actually gets it: it's *us* that service *them*. The reason I love [Look At The Princess](#), besides all the looove and angst and generally awesome story, is Zhaan's B-story: stewardship, not possession. In serving Moya, she realizes, she serves the Goddess; she sings back to the divine, in thanks and love. Not invasion or possession, but symbiosis.

-- Page 13 --

Rygel snorts at the understatement: "A few resources? She nearly suffocated us and starved you." But, I mean, it's not like she cut off his arm. Okay, I'm done. Pilot too: "That is all behind us. The fetus is alive and well." Zhaan wonders what the hell else they get to look forward to, as the baby grows. John trips out on his own train of

thought that leads from *What To Expect When You're Expecting A Baby Leviathan*, to Dr. Spock to, inevitably, Mr. Spock. Pilot (and this is fishy, I don't know why you'd ask the question if you're going to answer it this way) says that Pilots aren't "privy to any special knowledge regarding the gestation cycle of Leviathans." Whatever. John points out the most salient factoid of all, although we won't know how hardcore for a good long time: "Whatever it is, we have to remember the Peacekeepers put up a shield to keep it from happening." But is this because it's just so awful it would scare even the PKs, or because it's wonderful, and they hate wonderful things? The answer is: Yes.

Aeryn approaches D'Argo in his chambers and asks how he is doing. He is hollow. "I never had the chance to thank you," he says, as she enters -- I'm guessing for the first time -- looking at his back. Stiff and so still. "Thank me?" she smiles. He reminds her how she came to get him in her Prowler. Without thinking. She didn't even remember doing it. Think about that. They're both speaking so quietly. "You're welcome. Your wife's brother, the one who...The Peacekeeper. Macton?" Macton Tal. "I don't know him," she says, relieved. She takes a long breath, and asks to see Lo'Laan again. He turns on the chip. "She's quite beautiful." He asks her, upfront, if it's a surprise that "such a Sebacean" would love him, and she tries to level. The evenhandedness and respect between them now, even if they still haven't looked at each other directly. Blood debts and all. "D'Argo, it's ingrained in Peacekeepers from birth that we must keep the bloodlines pure. Such unions are evil." Does that mean Jothee is evil, then? (Not like you think, anyway. More like "sucky.")

She crouches to look him in the face. "...No. Because in his eyes I see you." (Talyn is half Peacekeeper, half Leviathan. Jothee's half Sebacean, half Luxan. So *what's Aeryn*? They're not her sons, they're her brothers.) He's still not looking, because there are tears in his eyes that can't fall. Ever. But what he misses out on seeing is the love and respect, and care and worry, in hers. It's not something we've really seen from her. "D'Argo. No matter what happens to us, I will never tell anyone about your son." And she stands, and leaves. And he breathes through it, shaking, still not crying, breathing in the grace of that. This shilquin song she's played for him, after seeing him vulnerable and happy and in love. Ugly truth, but real, and full of care: she's taken on his son as her responsibility too, given him the Peacekeeper sanction that was always denied his family. All it takes, even after everything's lost, is one Sebacean in the Territories, to say she loved and will protect Jothee, no matter what. Because he's D'Argo's son, and family. And he still won't cry, but the blood runs clear.

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## - Till The Suck Runs Out -

-- Page 1 --

John and Aeryn are sitting in the *Farscape One*, arguing about whether or not it was a good idea to integrate some of Moya's tech. Aww, even the module gets to be more. The whole time, they're flipping switches back and forth on each other: he'll press a button, and then she'll turn it off again. It's hilarious. They comm to Pilot about how the

communications signal is getting worse because of the solar flares they're investigating; Zhaan cautions John that the star they're dealing with is very erratic, and Aeryn makes the obvious joke that so is Crichton. Especially this week, but in the most awesome way; if you look up the dictionary definition of "sexbomb," it would be this episode, particularly Zhaan and John and Aeryn. Never let it be said that I turned down free eye-candy, except the price you pay for watching this is an hour of your damn life. The flares light them up in that tiny cockpit, and on Command, do something similar-in-metaphor to Zhaan. Pilot brings the serenely orgasmic Priestess back to reality by mentioning that the radiation might hurt the baby, and Zhaan agrees they should retreat to the planet's shadow and hide from the sun, but she grins sexily to herself.

A wormhole opens up. The module hangs out and gets knocked around just outside. Inside, Aeryn's desperately trying to get John's attention, where he sits in the module just behind her. Of course, he's really out of it: Wormhole = Home right now. All kinds of Canaveral images flooding, a huge smile. I like how Zhaan's orgasm is equivalent to home for John. (And suicide for Aeryn. Love this show.) "Crichton, look at it. It isn't stable. If we don't get away from it, it's going to tear us apart. Full thrusters! Crichton?" John finally snaps out and hits a button; the module races away from the wormhole, getting knocked all over the place. Everybody else crowds into Command; Rygel Jazzies about complaining about losing sleep; Zhaan chides him for his selfishness. Pilot informs them that he can't seem to get a fix on him through the interference, and floats the idea of following their trajectory to look for them. Rygel yawns and D'Argo enters, yelling at Pilot to shove it. "Aeryn and Crichton are on their own. We said we'd leave this miserable planet as soon as Moya was ready." Rygel agrees -- "there's nothing down there we want anyway" -- and all of Command lights up, as the sun comes out around the planet. "Right," says D'Argo. "So there's no reason for us to stay." Cut to Zhaan having an excellent orgasm all on her lonesome.

-- Page 2 --

Rygel stares at Zhaan's freaky, blissed-out face, and then goggles twice as hard as she comes up behind D'Argo and grabs his batch. "/ can think of a reason..." She moves around to face D'Argo and gives him a sexy grin. Hands on the Luxan! He almost can't look at her for a second because she's being so weird, but Rygel fondles his eyebrow (nice touch) and offers his opinion that Zhaan is completely fahrbot. Pilot confirms that "Delvian females are unusually sensitive to ionic radiation," and D'Argo steps lightly away from her unusual sensitivity. She's now having to lean up against the table in Command in order to keep her balance. She's like a big blue Tori Amos on the piano bench right now. "One of the gifts of the Delvian Seek. It's called a photogasm." D'Argo thinks it's gross; Rygel does him one better: "I'll get a mop and bucket." Whoa, little Muppet! John comms to them, and Zhaan pulls it together: "John, can you hear us?"

Aeryn and John in the clamshell, where Aeryn is punching buttons all over the place. Thank God Aeryn and John aren't around for the orgasms or they'd have to have the biggest fight ever. Someone would end up dead! Probably D'Argo. "Yeah, Zhaan, I hear you fine. Guess what just happened? We just started a wormhole!" He smiles and wriggles around like a puppy; Aeryn's disinterest is just a *tad* too studied to believe. I bet she thinks about [the offer](#) every day; I bet she turns it down again to

herself every day. D'Argo tells them it's fabulous, and all, but they need to get onboard so he can get the hell out of there. "What? D'Argo, obviously you didn't hear me. Read my lips: we just started a *wormhole*! Can't get out of here right now."

An alarm goes off in the module. Aeryn flicks yet more controls: "Pilot, I'm reading a plasma leak on the starboard propulsive. [Just like Zhaan!] Can you confirm?" John confirms it by, um, *looking out the window*; Pilot confirms it from Moya, and tells them to "prepare to abandon the module." I'm so sure. John's like, "Do what?" even as the alarm is getting louder. Pilot warns them he's "readying the docking web," and Aeryn tells John to get his helmet on, but John wigs out and tells her to get her hands off the eject button: "No way are we punching out." D'Argo tells them they have no choice, and Pilot agrees: "You can't bring the module aboard while it's leaking plasma. Moya doesn't want to put her baby at risk." D'Argo is suddenly very protective of the baby: "Nor should she." Shut up, D'Argo. Give me a reason you're not into this, because I know it's not because you're in love with John. Last week, every week after this, but not this week. John tries to get it across again -- "*I might have just found a way home*" -- but D'Argo points out that it's John's home, not anybody else's. John refuses to trash the *Farscape One* if there's any chance to save her, and D'Argo gets really aggressive: "There isn't. Stop stalling." (A) There Always Is; (B) Shut Up.

-- Page 3 --

"Rygel, before the flares started you were on the horn to the locals, right? You said you talked to somebody that was some kind of a mechanic." Oh, she's some kind of something, all right. Her name is Furlow and she's like if Norm from *Cheers* was a lady that kept trying to sniff your chili and steal your wallet. Wearing overalls. She's pretty fun and cool in this episode, all things considered, but I hold a grudge so bad I'm hating her *from the future*. Pilot sends John the coordinates for Furlow, and D'Argo attempts to put his foot down: "I forbid this." John has no time for D'Argo's bullshit today. "Sometimes you're a real pain in the ass," he says, and cuts communications. As John and Aeryn fade from the clamshell, D'Argo screams his name again and again: "Crichton! Crichton!" Already we have a problem, because D'Argo stopped making sense before this episode started. Inside the module, Aeryn slams a switch, scowling ahead. "You're with me on this, right?" Aeryn points out that he only asked after they were heading down, which is a much more valid issue than the ones that D'Argo has raised, because those do not exist, because all he's doing is yelling. Me, I would take it as a compliment, because what he's saying is *of course* she's coming with him, because they're the *of course* kind of in love where you don't even have to talk about it.

Somebody in a white robe and goggles tracks *Farscape One* as it lands near the Dam-Ba-Da Depot, and then we watch the techs hauling the module into a maintenance bay.

John and Aeryn follow Furlow around the depot, where she 'babbles about what needs to be done. "Should have it for you by nightfall. Probably." He asks if she's sure it's all okay, if the plasma leak is contained, and she gives him a speech, while also yelling at her tech crew, about how his module is cruddy and primitive. She offers to take it off his hands and he grins. "She's not for sale." He tells her he just wants to get back in orbit "before these flares go away entirely." Furlow says the flares should die down by the end of the day -- but they'll be back in 4.8 [years]. John wigs. "I gotta get

back up there! I'm collecting data." She figures -- she's a tech -- that he's researching "unusual spatial phenomena." I don't know what she means by that, but Aeryn tells her to get back on topic, because even ladies of Furlow's questionable aesthetic aren't allowed to talk to John about science. "Don't make conversation. Fix the module!" Furlow thinks Aeryn's gross; John's kind of weirded out by her tone as well: "*Sorry if we seem a little pushy*, but we are in a hurry and you're obviously the best mechanic on the planet. So, think maybe you can help us out?" She's right, he's wrong. Follow the instinct. Even I can tell this chick is no good; even adjusting for the fact that Aeryn's always, always right. "Since you ask so nicely," Furlow flirts, "I'll see what I can do." She then politely asks Aeryn to get the hell out of there so she can work, and tosses John a couple pairs of goggles, for the flares.

-- Page 4 --

Depot main square. John's got his goggles on his forehead and looks totally cute; Aeryn's got hers on already and looks totally cute. Later on she'll let them hang down from her neck, and they will look totally cute there, too. They laugh about how silly they look in the goggles and then head out into the square. "Furlow better be good. I gotta get back up there." Aeryn -- studied, disinterested -- decides just then to call Moya. "Pilot, can you read us?" People stare and point at them in the square. "Zhaan? D'Argo?" John grunts that ADD'Argo's just going to have to wait. "Yeah. Well, we're gonna have to tell them something -- like we're gonna be stuck on this dump for longer than we anticipated." John asks Aeryn what the hell her problem is. "You should be dancing in the streets, you know. If I figure out how to make a wormhole, I am outta here. I'm outta your hair once and for all..." One little beat. One tiny beat, less than a second long. "...Unless you wanna come with me? You know that offer's still open, if you wanna think about it." She declares that she doesn't want to think about it. "Talk about it?" *No!*

Before you can say "unspoken sexual tension and everything that's going on with Aeryn right now and also at all times," three Craises appear in hologram in the middle of the square. That's three times the stupid ponytail! "*Attention! There are fugitives among you, fugitives that can be worth a great deal to anyone of you.*" Aeryn identifies this for Crichton as a wanted beacon. "*I am Captain Bialar Crais, and I am offering a substantial reward to anyone who can assist us in the recapture of three escaped prisoners.*" John notes that he said *three*, which means he's leaving out Aeryn and John both. "...*These three fugitives from Peacekeeper custody have violated their parole.*" John knows that Crais wants to kill him himself, but can't figure out why he's not asking for Aeryn's head as well. "Oh, I think I might have an answer." A horrible one. Aeryn reaches in and removes the beacon. The stupid ponytail disappears; something even stupider approaches.

There shouldn't be a planet of lawyers. That's lame. And it shouldn't be called *Litigara*, for fuck's sake. The time for people with their faces half-white and half-black and everybody learns a little something was in the neighborhood of one hundred years ago. In the same way, if you're going to investigate the alpha-dog boy issues that have been floating around D'Argo and John -- and Aeryn -- since the show started, why you gotta have actual goddamn dog people? If you're gonna have bloodhound tracker mercs, why actual goddamn bloodhounds? That being said, the dog people are pretty cool-looking, I don't mind their performances at all, and this episode cuts through a lot

of the layered bullshit. Entirely too cavalier and "show, don't tell" by half, but I like the instinct, I guess.

-- Page 5 --

Nice of them to let an idiot write the actual episode after they broke it. "Oh, those jokes we were talking about for the last week...you just kinda wrote them as-is, didya? None of that bullshit layering or subtlety." Fuck yeah! "Cool. I mean, usually we go ahead and let the subtext talk for itself, and try to work around the whole 'actually explaining every goddamn thing' issue, but...this is nice, too." Fuck yeah! "Oh, I see you've actually used the phrase 'alpha dog' in this script. Like a -- oh! -- like a hundred times! That's really...awesome!" Fuck yeah! "I need a margarita. You?" Fuck yeah! "Oh, says here you wrote 'A Bug's Life,' and some episodes of *Pacific Blue*, so that's not...awful, or anything." Fuck yeah!

"... Oh, and *and* 'Jeremiah Crichton,' you wrote. You actually wrote this, and 'Jeremiah Crichton,' on a goddamn piece of paper. And somebody put it up on the screen. That's fucking...do you realize I put three kids through college on a sitcom writer salary? Do you understand what I'm fucking saying when I say that? Come a little fucking closer because I want to make sure you know what I'm fucking talking about when I say that I am going to fuck you up. 'Actual fucking dog people' right up my goddamn Methodist bitch-killing ass. Come closer, I dare you. That's me using sarcasm, by the way. Like when I say 'This episode doesn't make me want to kill not only myself, but also all the dogs, and all the aliens I encounter from now until eternity.'"

The Vorcarian Blood Tracker (Yeah) Rolf (Yeah) approaches with his gun at the ready. "You! Get away from there!" John asks Aeryn what the hell this is about, and as the female Vorcarian approaches, Aeryn admits she has no idea, but to let her handle it. "Who are you?" Rolf growls. "Have you come in search of the fugitives?" Aeryn tells him they're just visiting, with no mercenary aims. Rolf growls that she's lying. "No," she says. You'd have to know her to know that she's irritated by them. "We're just curious about this beacon here." Rolf asks John if Aeryn is "his female," and looks her up and down. "I'm no one's female!" she grits, hard. Hell yeah. Rolf nods to Rorg (... Yeah), who slams her gun down and attacks Aeryn. "Not your female? Then you won't miss her," sleazes Rolf. Dog people. They're people, but also kinda like dogs. Get it?

But John kinda gets it; he circles Rolf even as Rorg has Aeryn pinned, snarling. John grabs his goggles and gets in Rolf's face: "Back off! Get that weapon outta my face before I feed it to ya!" Rolf responds cautiously and backs off. "Now you tell your bitch to let my female go." Rolf asks if, then, Aeryn really is John's mate. "One of 'em," says John, giving good rage. Rolf grins appreciatively. "Now turn her loose!" Rolf gives the nod and Rorg rolls off, Aeryn pushing her away and staring at John, who's off on a thing: "You! Keep your damn mouth shut unless I tell you to speak!" Still not getting it, Aeryn keeps quiet and more than a little wowed by this bullshit he's perpetrating. The Vorcarians watch her closely. "Hey!" John yells, all eyes-on-me. "Now who are you? And what do you want with the fugitives?" Rolf explains that they're Vorcarian Blood Trackers -- "The best" -- and John corrects him: "Second best."

-- Page 6 --

John picks up Rorg's guns and shoves it into Rolf's chest: "I'm Butch. This is Sundance." (Hell yeah, part two.) Aeryn's mouth is now just *hanging* open. "You can



forget about the fugitives. Sundance, rip out that beacon. I don't want any other idiots seeing it and getting a bright idea. That bounty belongs to me." He stares down Rolf, who attempts to growl menacingly. John is so, so awesome sometimes. Oh man, I forgot: John's wearing a fitted tee the entire episode to like where you can actually read the thoughts of his muscles, and Aeryn is looking ten times hotter than normal in a similar t-shirt but with additional totally sexy overalls and her hair all...well, I mean it's very...this is not the worst episode you ever saw, and the hair is a big part of that. Maybe the main thing. If they'd kept these outfits throughout, you're looking at six or seven seasons, easy. Maybe a national holiday.

Up in the sky, Pilot informs the boys that the flares are still cutting them off from communicating with John and Aeryn. D'Argo's still in a hurry to leave, enough that he continues to threaten to leave them behind. He and Rygel discuss how Zhaan's on the terrace jacking off, and then we cut to her clothes, which are in a pile, and her hand stretched out across them in the light. "We must *never leave this place*," she groans. Ha! Dude, she is so awesome in this episode. D'Argo heads out to get her, and Rygel warns him not to. "She said something about leaving her clothes behind." D'Argo's just completely out of his depth now. I wonder how much of this is more sex stuff, poor guy. Even the 900-year old Priestess is getting her rocks off, and all D'Argo has is John yanking his tentacles. "Frell with Crichton's precious module, I'm going down to that planet and drag them both back here myself." Rygel says he's glad to be of help. John and the Vorcarians sit at a campfire; Aeryn's behind John, holding the beacon. He asks the dogs why they even think the fugitives are still around. "The Leviathan ship they stole was sighted in a system not far from here. We think this might be their next stop." And, John wonders delicately, if there are more hunters on the way. "Could be, the wanted beacons were on several planets. Why do you ask?" The sneaky tone in his voice. "Just wondering how many more bounty hunters are out of luck, because these fugitives are mine," says John. He's doing a good job of picking up on all this stuff. Who knew he was a dog whisperer? The Vorcarians growl at this last, and John points a smoldering brand at them. "Knock it off! What do you know about Luxans, or Hynerians, or Delvians?" Nothing. John's version of "hardcore" is a lot like his version of "sexy," and "diplomatic," and also like his version of "trying not to cry," in that they are equally hot and equally quiet. I don't think it's lazy acting, I think it's about going internal, and he manages to do all of these, especially the second one, to the very best of his or anyone else's ability. They stare at each other; Aeryn looks from the beacon back to John. "The beacon is useless," he says harshly. "It doesn't tell you these fugitives won't be taken without a lot of blood spilled." They laugh that they like spilled blood, get it, because they are gross, stupid dog people with stupid dog noses. "Well, I don't. Not my own. How good are you two? I might be willing to cut you in. You help me capture the prisoners and we'll split the bounty 70/30." Rolf gets in John's face again, pointing his gun: "70/40." John promises him 80/40. "Are you in or out?" They back down; cut to the dogs walking alone down the square. "Are we in?" And they laugh: "For now." (To be fair, I also hate the dog people from the future. For some reason, this episode is a total milestone for callbacks; I admit I might be missing something. I submit to you, however, that this is because I fall asleep continually trying to watch this crap.)

John and Aeryn hang in the warehouse, Aeryn still tech-tinkering with the beacon: "How long do you think your ruse is going to work?" Not long, but hopefully long enough for the *Farscape One* to get fixed. "You know, you're taking this pretty well. I figured you'd be killing yourself by now." Seriously. She shrugs. "It's necessary." She asks how the alpha plan occurred to him. "Hunch. My Dad had a couple of Dobermans." Not translated. "Dogs? They're pack animals. The biggest, baddest dog gets to be the alpha male. The leader." Which, Aeryn points out, is ironic: John's neither the biggest nor the baddest. Not compared to the Vorcarians, not compared to anything. "Yeah, well, they don't know that. Any sign of submission and you're lunch." Aeryn snits: "I showed no sign of submission." And John tells the ugly dog truth. "You didn't have to. You're a female." She gives him a scorcher and he apologizes. "I don't make the rules." But he sure is familiar with them, she grumbles. I get her point, and the point of writing that line, but on the other hand, Peacekeeper males wear stupid ponytails and eyeliner, so shut it. It's not exactly unflattering to humans -- *or dogs* -- that she doesn't understand these stupid rules.

Aeryn fiddles with the beacon and then stands up, at the ready. Crais reappears: "*Your personal encoding sequence is accepted.*" Interested, John comes around behind her to watch. "*Officer Aeryn Sun, Special Commando, Icarian Company, Pleisar Regiment, currently absent without leave.*" Unconsciously she stands at attention. You could cry for her. Were this an actual episode. "Crais is sending you love letters?" She nods: "I suspected as much." Really? I would have figured Braca. "*You have committed numerous acts of treason. You cannot hope to avoid us forever. You will be captured; you will face trial, and punishment. Your one hope of avoiding this fate is to accept my conditional amnesty. Abandon the human criminal. Return the Leviathan. Surrender Ka D'Argo, Pa'u Zotoh Zhaan and Dominar Rygel Sixteen. Comply, and you will retire honorably with your commission fully restored. You have my oath as a Peacekeeper.*" She looks interested at that, although she did sneak a look toward John at "abandon the human." John's like, "Whatever." She breathes, and stares, and watches the empty place where the hologram just was. "Come on! Let's light a fire under Furlow so we can ditch these dogs before the flares go entirely." She doesn't follow him to the door. "Hey, you're not taking him seriously?" She turns sharply, back to Officer Sun once more: "I *always* take him seriously." That must be difficult.

-- Page 8 --

Horrible, awful, terrible no-good '80s sci-fi music plays throughout the next part, all thrashin' guitar and bitchin' drums. D'Argo's feet in the sand, near the Prowler, Qualta Blade in hand, heading toward Dam-Ba-Da. He's wearing Boba Fett on his face. "Pilot, I've landed near the city. I'll try to make contact again once I've found Crichton and Aeryn." Knew he wouldn't leave. Somebody in a white robe and goggles spies on D'Argo behind a bush. Flare, and then in the Depot square, the Vorcarians pick up his scent. The screen flares white again. Out in the sand, a jeep speeds toward the square. D'Argo, walking, feels something approaching, and finds Rolf on the ground nearby, ready to snipe. He puts the blade to Rolf's back and tells him to drop the gun. Rolf does, but of course Rorg surprises D'Argo, and forces him to drop the blade. He attacks her, but Rolf stuns him from behind, and he drops. It's couples going after

D'Argo's last nerve this week: John and Aeryn, the dog people, Zhaan and the solar flares. Romance.

Inside, Furlow's telling the white-robed guy she might have a buyer for (I think) Aeryn's Prowler. Or John's flight records possibly. I don't know, whatever. She's sneaky for sneaky's sake. "I'll let you know."

Cut to John, inspecting the underside of his module as he chats with Furlow about this and that. She asks him again to buy the thing, and he finally asks why she's so into that concept. Some of the parts show signs of having been close to a proto-wormhole. John comes closer as another bounty hunter, wearing a red mechanic's uniform, watches interestedly. "What do you know about wormholes?" Nothing, except maybe they exist and nobody's ever found one. He agrees that's the prevailing thought.

"...Until I picked up bursts of unusual gravity waves not long ago in the upper bonosphere. Sure looked like a wormhole, or at least the beginnings of one." John nods and says if she's right, he should get back up there. "Of course," she nods menacingly. "For your research." (Another flavor of science, here: the flavor of seeing only how it can profit you.)

John pauses, then climbs a ladder to check his cockpit. Furlow watches him, and because of the way he has to angle himself to do this, there's a lot to watch: "You know, a good-looking guy like you shouldn't be getting around in a pile of old junk like that. Just so happens I recently came by a second-hand Prowler..." He looks up suddenly, and then runs off as Aeryn's approaching. "Stay with the module." The red mercenary watches.

-- Page 9 --

John dashes out, claps on his goggles and sees the dog people leading D'Argo into the square, wearing a really complicated, stupid harness. John murmurs "bonehead" to himself a couple of times, then goes back to Dog John. "Good! You didn't screw up. Hand him over and head after the other two." Rolf laughs and says they should all interrogate him together, rather than leaving him in John's hands. "He can lead us to the Hynerian and the Delvian," growls Rorg. "Who do you think is in charge here?!" shouts Dog John, and D'Argo threatens to kill him, from behind Boba Face. "Crichton? Your name is Crichton?" demands Rolf. "Yeah, *Butch* Crichton." For once.

D'Argo is unconscious, strapped to a metal frame no less ridiculously complex than the harness in the last scene, getting ready to get tortured. John stares around all shifty, trying to think of something. Rolf points an ugly little knife at John, while Rorg sniffs D'Argo. "Doesn't matter what you do to a Luxan," says Dog John. "He won't talk." As usual, Rolf picks up on John's total fakeness, and he's like, "No, actually we're going to cut him up anyway." They totally grab a tentacle and giggle. "I bet these are sensitive." John says they're useless, too, and Rolf slices into one of them. Damn. D'Argo's eyes roll back, and John can't keep the urgency out of his voice: "You're making him bleed!" Also known as the point of cutting people. He explains, enraged, about how the dark blood means that he'll die of blood shock unless you do the thing. Rolf argues that Crais doesn't necessarily need them alive, and John kind of wavers that the beacon *he* saw did. Come on, Dog John. The Vorcarians get all up in John's grill and he tries to Dog John them, a little too late. The dogs decide he's maybe in a secret alliance with D, and there's a lot of cockfight madness, but the upshot is that they talk him into torturing D'Argo to prove...something. I hate this episode. I'll just

admit that now. The dialogue is clunky, very little happens that we didn't already know about, and like one thing happens at the end which is only important in hindsight because we haven't really talked about wormholes in a long time, until this episode. The whole obvious obliquity of the [fight with Matalla](#) is scrawled all over this episode. In crayon. Even the Aeryn stuff is retread.

If it's a waste of time, the dogs say, then why not waste a little time? John grabs the wounded tentacle and squeezes it super hard, flipping in and out of Dog John voice. "You listen to me. *You listen to me*, you tattooed freak." D'Argo twists and tries to clench a fist; the dogs giggle. "I don't care if you talk to me or not. You can die right now or you can...*hold on as long as you can*...but either way, unless you do what I tell you to do, it's over. You understand me?" He gives the tentacle one last twist, and then comes around in front: "Damn you anyway!" He punches D'Argo hard in the face, knocking him out as the dogs chuckle. John goes to a corner and wipes his hand: the blood is clear. "Waste of time," he murmurs, grossed out but relieved that he's once again beat the toxicity out of my man Ka D'Argo.

-- Page 10 --

The red bounty hunter lurks around, watching Aeryn bitch at Furlow, who's begging her to go away. "Why don't you go for a nice little walk outside, take in some of the sights?" Such as? "Well, if you go straight out that way there's a truly outstanding expanse of sand." Heh. "Just as much as you could want." There are plenty of things Aeryn wants, she explains, but "sand's not one of them." She notices the red merc poking around in the module and realizes he's accessing the flight recorder. Furlow is moderately interested in this fact. Aeryn grabs the guy and Furlow watches as they fight for one million billion years, and at one point his goggles come off, revealing glowing yellow creepy eyes. He finally knocks her down and her goggles come off just in time for her to get hit full-on with a solar flare. Blinded, she rises and tries to fight the guy, swinging on air in slow motion. It's rough. The guy's about to smash her to death with a huge metal tank when Furlow takes him out. "Whoever he was, he's dead now. You okay?" No. She can't see. Not even a blind and terrified Aeryn is interesting in this episode. She's just all, "You can't help me! Nobody can!" after like the first five seconds. Already knew all that.

Zhaan sneaks up behind Rygel and scares him. He throws his hands over his eyes, so he won't see her. I love how much play his disgust with her is getting in this episode. I'm just not convinced there's anything else going on with it. Two characters blind, because they can't handle the effects of the solar flares; because John and Zhaan's naked desire is too much to look at. But that doesn't explain D'Argo, or the lamentable fact that there are dog people. Who don't even matter because we've already been through this whole "Showing aggression is just as good as if you had actual offensive capability." It's mostly funny, and this scene is definitely funny, but it's still a crap episode that flashes back to every single other episode in the most boring possible manner. "Zhaan, are you fully clothed?" She grins hugely and commences fucking with him, wonderfully. "I'm not wearing a *scrap*. I'm nude as a newborn baby!" He shouts at her to get the hell out of there. "Don't insult my eyes with your naked blue extremities." She crouches around him, laughing. "Which ones in particular don't you like? Show them to me!" He thanks her, but no, and she pulls his hands from his eyes, which he squeezes shut. "Help! Help! A mad Delvian exhibitionist is forcing

herself on me! Visually!" Zhaan laughs almost as hard as anyone would, hearing that line. She comes in close and blows on his face, so his eyes open. She laughs, fully clothed of course, and he's irritated. She asks him where D'Argo is, and Rygel tells her he went down to the planet to get John and Aeryn.

-- Page 11 --

The dogs huddle together before D'Argo's frame, where he's still bound and unconscious. Rorg scents something new -- "very subtle..." -- and realizes it's Delvian. They laugh. We watch the entirety of *Lawrence Of Arabia* as Zhaan walks toward them, and they walk toward her, and it's very sandy and there are dunes. Zhaan senses danger, Jacob senses narcolepsy and maybe just a soupcon of hatemail. John comes in babbling about how D'Argo's been kidnapped by "the bloodhounds," and finally comes to rest in front of Aeryn, winding down slowly as he realizes she's been blinded. Aeryn and Furlow talk about how it's probably just temporary, and she explains about the other bounty hunter. "She caught a solar glare in the face as she was taking him out," Furlow says, which is not exactly the whole story but whatever. John reaches for Aeryn's arm and she jerks it away and is all, "Don't help me, Crichton!" and he gets super intense like they're in the last fifteen minutes of a Very Special Episode about letting other people help you, and it's so stupid. "Stop acting like a bad-ass Peacekeeper," he spits, and she exposit that she's an ex-PK, actually, and he's very sweet about "I know," and Furlow watches this all happen, and it's stupid some more. John takes off and tells Furlow to get her ass moving on the module. Aeryn leans back against the module, staring into space, and I do feel bad for her, but not because she's blind.

D'Argo wakes and bursts his bonds, alone in the warehouse. Elsewhere, Zhaan is being freaking incredible. She sees the dogs approaching and crouches down in the sand, blue against the white sands, and moves her hands over her head and down, dropping a shimmer across herself; the dogs sniff the air, having lost her subtle scent. She's being so unexpected this week. The dogs growl, and a flare lights up the screen. "Ahh, help me. This is hardly the time..." Zhaan smiles and falls back, against the sand. Beautiful, and terribly alien. Even her orgasms are solipsistic and self-consciously transcendent. I'm not knockin', I'm just saying no wonder it creeps Rygel out: you won't fuck John but you'll fuck *the SUN*? I don't know which is sicker. John comes into the warehouse with D'Argo's Qualta; D'Argo's seemingly unconscious, strapped to the stupid dog device. "Rolf? Rorg? Let's go," John Dogs. He whistles like a smartass and then grins hugely at D'Argo's body. "Ha! Some days you get lucky. D'Argo, wake up." Instant boot to the face, causing John to stagger back and drop the blade. "You brought it. Good! Now I can start working on *your* sensitive appendages." Don't touch the sensitive appendages. John's feeling that too and runs away, whining that they don't have time for this. What follows is an endless discussion lacking subtlety or believable emotion, regarding: how (a) John tortured D'Argo, except (b) he didn't, except (a) he did, except (c) why is D'Argo there in the first place, and (d) all John wanted to do was go home, and note the (e) lack of arm-cutting-off that fucking entailed, and (f) John's always covering for D'Argo's ass and covering for his family secrets, because they have this (g) great romance or something but they (h) hate each other and now (i) D'Argo is going to kill John because (a) he tortured D'Argo. It's like reading text messages between

mainstreamed teenagers and it goes on forever. Or was it because (j) John looks like a PK, which (k) *the fuck?*, not to mention (l) D'Argo always has to be the ALPHA MALE with the BIG SHOT BIG BRITCHES but it's okay because (m) they are both selfish and (n) childish but (o) John never tried to kill D'Argo with a weapon or his bare hands, v. (p) D'Argo doing that constantly. But what if (q) that means they can never be friends because (r) something or (s) whatever, and then they shake hands. Not kidding. So now they're friends. At least they didn't call each other sluts and whores like the last time they let Little Billy Keane write a scene. "Warriors on Earth did this to show that they weren't holding weapons," explains John, and then the only awesome thing: D'Argo raises his Qualta with his right hand, passes it right up in John's grill, then transfers to his left and shakes John's hand. *Advantage D'Argo.*

-- Page 12 --

Aeryn fiddles with the beacon some more, Furlow watching as it beeps and does stuff. "You really have no intention of fixing this module anytime soon, have you, Furlow?" Furlow admits it's a lot easier to get her shit done without Boba Fett and Goldeneye and dog people attacking from every direction all the time. Aeryn smiles and offers a deal: "You any good at cyber manipulation?" I don't know what that means; I have Net Nanny. It's better this way, trust me.

John and D'Argo head across the square toward Furlow's; D'Argo will take Old Blindy back on the Prowler and John will meet them back on Moya. Except for the hail of gunfire that hits right then, causing them to duck behind some crates. D'Argo's still covering John. Shooting commences! It's the dog people! Banter! John offers to cover D'Argo so he can get back to the Prowler and D'Argo calls him his "ally" and says he won't abandon John. They shook hands and whatever. "Great! So we can be buried together. I'll deal with this." John swaggers out, thinking he's going to Dog John them again, but they just keep shooting at him, accusing him of switching sides on them. Aeryn comes walking out of Furlow's, somehow clueless like being blind makes you not hear gunfire, and then there's more shooting, and Aeryn's walking in slo-mo, and John grabs her. She whispers, "Watch," as the beacon goes off. *"I am Captain Bialar Crais. The Peacekeeper Command Carrier assigned to recover the three escaped prisoners has been called home on other business. Therefore, the reward offer for the fugitives has been officially withdrawn."* I don't like this episode enough to check that all those phonemes were in the original message but I bet they were. Aeryn grins hugely, John stares at her, Rolf and Rorg are ghost like Swayze, problem solved. Episode over? Hell no. John congratulates her on her idea -- although she admits that Furlow did all the work -- and John's like, "You're so awesome but hey, those solar flares, so I can never see you again in this lifetime, okay? Let's get on with that." Zhaan wanders up at this point to inform them that the flares have stopped, witness her not rolling around and moaning. She has a funny, almost embarrassed grin as she navigates this particular appropriateness minefield, and she assures John there will be other stars with flare activity. "We'll find them." He whines about how close he was and stalks off. I can't care, because the only time he's ever mentioned this is in the credits, and they don't watch those like we do.

-- Page 13 --

The module's ready and Aeryn's vision is clearing up. "Listen, Aeryn. Crais' offer of amnesty...you're not seriously considering it, are you? You don't think he'll keep his



word, do you?" She believes it, but. "But what he means by honorable retirement is a radiation-induced brain fever to bring on the living death." So then WTF? "It was nice, just for a moment, to believe that it was genuine. That I could go back." *Just like John with the flares! So subtle!* They stare at each other and wonder how this episode happened. Aeryn, I assume because she's bored as shit, says she needs to run the preflight check, and he tells her to rest her eyes. "I'll take care of this." Aeryn hesitates, with an apologetic smile, before telling him there's a debt with Furlow she can't honor, so he needs to settle the account. Assuming, as we all did I'm sure, that this involved sex with Furlow, he wanders over and they discuss the bill. She includes a fee for goggle rental, but agrees to throw those in after some haggling. Except they don't have any money, so "we have a problem." Unless, she says, "there's something else of value you have to offer...and I don't mean your charming smile." Come on. Neither do I. John stares at her. "You know," she muses, "The ability to create a stable wormhole -- travel through space and time -- would be incredibly..." Profitable is the word. He agrees to download a copy of his data down to her from Moya, but she shakes her head. "Exclusive rights, or there's no deal." They stare at each other forever and he reminds us that "that data may be [his] only ticket home," and she invites him to stay at Dam-Ba-Da and "be part of an exciting experiment," but of course he's gotta keep running. So his whole choice is about running with the crew or getting home, sort of, in five years. "There's probably half a dozen bounty hunters on their way here right now," he says, and she agrees that this is a problem. He digs the data tape from his dungarees and hands it over. "I get to start from scratch." On a project we basically inferred for ourselves and thus don't actually understand the sacrifice being made here. Or the better words would be "care about." I love John and I love his whole wormhole deal, but...come on. Don't go all crappy TV show on me now. "Hey, Furlow. Five years from now I'll be waiting for you at the end of that wormhole." She brightly invites him to come back to Dam-Ba-Da if he ever needs any more repair work done. Which is actually the saddest and most effective part of the entire episode, and we won't know that for at least two years. I hate fucking Furlow so bad. She keeps talking, nobody cares, John and Aeryn take off, having learned nothing and lost nothing we knew had value.

-- Page 14 --

But. I'll be seeing you shortly waaaay over in Season Four, after a quick stop off at the saddest episode ever put on screen. Thanks again, **Strega**. And thanks to you guys, too: this is a shit note to go out on, but I really appreciate the opportunity to go back over these beginning stories and see all the wonders I probably would have completely forgotten about. It's been super awesome! And for the last time, about Zhaan, and it's worth saying twice:

*"...It may be that the way of life that he has chosen for himself and the peculiar strength and sweetness of his character may have an ever-growing influence over his fellow men so that, long after his death perhaps, it may be realized that there lived in this age a very remarkable creature."*

But then, that's all of them. And you, too. Thanks again.

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<http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/show/farscape/the-flax/>

## - He Said, She Said -

-- Page 1 --

*Moya's* transport pod floats through space as we hear Crichton exclaim, "I am doing it!" My advice to you regarding that statement is, coincidentally, the same as my advice to you regarding the quality of the forthcoming episode: Don't get your hopes up. Anyway, Aeryn, through Crichton's typical mélange of what he calls Southernisms and the rest of us, whether in possession of translator microbes or not, call incomprehensible, is teaching Crichton to drive. Crichton is psyched that he's learning, so much so that he's unfazed when Aeryn informs him that he's picking up the skills "more slowly than the dumbest recruit." Of course, if he paused every time someone insulted his intelligence, it's probably safe to guess he wouldn't have made it this far, in several senses of the expression. Crichton expositos that the more modifications he makes to *Farscape One*, the more he needs to understand bio-mechanoid technology. He then babbles about how the area they're in is such a perfect spot for a driving lesson because there's nothing around for miles and miles and miles, and with that setup, even the dumbest recruit knows these two are headed for trouble. Of course, Crichton still has no idea.

*Moya*. Rygel is waxing reminiscent about all the odalisques he used to have in his seraglio, and I'm not using big words to be pretentious -- it just makes thinking about all the tail Rygel scored over the years a little more abstract. Zhaan isn't exactly hanging on Rygel's every word, either, especially as he's making an irritating noise with some sort of electronic strategy game that looks like a cross between checkers, shuffleboard, and Simon. Also annoyed is D'Argo, who busts into the room complaining about *Moya's* pregnancy secretions and smells, particularly since his Luxan nose is quite sensitive. He basically bitches that Crichton's too dumb to teach, while Zhaan damns Crichton with faint defense, essentially saying that while he's a moron, it might do them some good to spend the requisite time educating him. The three-way bitchery ends with D'Argo yelling at them to shut up. You'd think on a ship this size, these three might be able to spend a little time apart from each other, but apparently the outrageous price of sound stages is a universal constant.

Now we're back in the transport pod, where Crichton is babbling about how *Top Gun* the experience is. Aeryn: "I have no need for speed." Hee. She does admit that she enjoys the teamwork aspect of combat flying, but Crichton is hardly her ideal partner, and he'd never make it as a Peacekeeper. "You screw up on the last day of simulation flying, you die." Crichton sarcastically asks if the simulator kills you, but Aeryn's silence confirms that that's actually the case. Between that and the [genetic sieving](#), Crichton, it's lucky you grew up in our neck of the woods. There's an odd cut to an exterior shot, and Aeryn expositos she's getting something to eat when the pod appears to get caught by some invisible force. Despite Crichton's inability to get any "pulseback soundings," they continue to get pulled in, with both of them eventually getting thrown from their chairs and into the opening credits.

-- Page 2 --

Back in the pod, Crichton crawls over to Aeryn and wakes her up. Confusion abounds, as, although they're not getting any mass readings, their view of the stars is being blocked by something. Also, Crichton thinks they hit something, since it felt like the head-on collision he was in when he was nineteen. Having only seen the first season,

I don't know if that's going to be Important Later, but I figure an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of email. Aeryn admits she doesn't know what's going on. Back on *Moya*, Zhaan is grabbing the plastic slingshot/tuning fork-looking thing away from Rygel. She then starts poking him with it, which is kind of hilarious, even if such hijinx are unbecoming to a *tenth*-level Pa'u. A high-pitched test of the emergency broadcast system cuts into the tomfoolery, causing the three infants to cover their ears and yell at Pilot. Pilot cuts the noise with a bored "So sorry. I appear to have hit the wrong comm." Hee. Pilot's finally growing a spine, and an amusing one at that. Zhaan snaps, "You desired our attention, Pilot?" I think he actually desired you to shut up, but your attention will have to do for now. He tells them that an unidentified vessel is approaching and signaling for permission to come aboard. The vessel apparently has pieces of weaponry, but nothing operational. Well, if that's the case, the indicated play is definitely to invade it. Cut to a prop ship discarded from the original *Doctor Who* as too technologically deficient-looking docking underneath *Moya*, and then some guy who will soon be joining the Australian musical tour of *Pirates Of The Caribbean* is being marched up to the bridge and telling them they're in the vicinity of "The Flax," which is a "magnodrift mesh, seventy-five million zacrons long." Thanks for clearing that up. Anyway, the Flax is invisible until you get caught in it (and afterward too, from what we saw), and was put there by the "Zenetan pirates." I wonder if those pirates wear belly shirts too. I kind of hope not. Zhaan bustles off to warn Crichton and Aeryn. D'Argo gets the pirate, "Staan," up to the bridge, where Rygel is still playing around with his tuning fork. (Ew.) Staanz says he's a "garbologist. I'm a connoisseur of what other people throw away." I wonder what they call eBay all the way out here. Staanz identifies the game as "Tadek," and notes that Rygel's set is in good shape. After the two of them each try to convince the other that he sucks at the game, they settle in to play. Of course, Rygel's slightly less convincing, given that he owns the set. And that he's a lying sack of puppet.

-- Page 3 --

Back on the pod, Crichton is acting like he knows how to fix things, while Aeryn exposit that they're not moving at all, and what's more, they're not getting a comm signal despite the fact that the equipment is functional. Despite this, when Crichton tells her that their power readings are down, she claims that's "impossible." It doesn't seem any less possible than anthropomorphic Muppets, but I guess without her comment, Crichton's picturesque murmuring of "Impossible" would have seemed out of place. Then the lights go out, and he exhales, "This isn't good." Crichton, you may be an impossible combination of virile, sensitive, and scorching, but leave the editorializing to the pros.

On *Moya*, Zhaan worries that Crichton and Aeryn are caught in the Flax, and wonders, if Staanz did in fact come to warn them, what he wants in return. D'Argo pulls up a Peacekeeper record and discovers that Staanz is wanted...

... and then he's marching off to kick some ass as Zhaan pleads with him not to rip Staanz's head off, or at least not until they know more about the Flax business.

D'Argo isn't trying to hear that, so Zhaan points out that they're both ex-prisoners of the Peacekeepers, and wonders if D'Argo's checked his own record to see what lies have been written about him. Googling yourself is probably just as effective. D'Argo: "Not everyone imprisoned by the Peacekeepers was innocent." It's too bad the

translator microbes don't seem to work on *Moya* herself, because I would have loved to hear her wake up from her pregnancy haze to deliver an "Oh, SNAP." D'Argo rushes off to the bridge...

... where Staan and Rygel are sizing each other up like they're at the final table. Staan makes a move, and Rygel, who's smoking from a hookah-like contraption, exhales in his face. You'd think *Moya* would be a little sensitive about people smoking inside her when she's pregnant, but maybe she understands that they're trying to drown out the attendant smells by any means necessary. At least they're not using aerosol sprays. Rygel gets all plot-pointy about the "interesting move" Staan made, and I admit I don't know how to play the game, but moving some piece three squares ahead doesn't seem to warrant a whole lot of comment here. That move would even pass in *Candyland*. Rygel asks to raise the stakes, and produces some sort of statuette that looks like it's made from lapis lazuli, but just then D'Argo arrives and hauls Staan out of his chair all Darth Vader asking for the plans at the beginning of *Star Wars: A New Hope*. (Well, without the crushed neck vertebrae and all.) Rygel complains that he had Staan right where he wanted him, as Staan explains that he used to be a Zenetan pirate. He offers proof, so D'Argo lets him down, whereupon Staan pulls down his pants. Rygel chooses this moment to go all "Oh, MERCY ME" on us, not that I blame him, while D'Argo is just all, "And?" which is another valid choice. Staan explains that the tattoos on his leg prove that he was a Zenetan, but he was captured and spent nine cycles in a labor camp, and his Zenetan brothers did nothing to help him, so now he warns people off the Flax, both to piss the Zenetans off and hopefully to get rewards from the warnees. Zhaan shows up and checks Staan out, and then D'Argo breathes, "Put those back on." Heh. Rygel hems and haws over asking Staan something, but Zhaan smoothly interjects, "For an anthropoid biped, there seems to be... something missing." I think it's safe to say that she's cast her research net far and wide on that one. Staan admits that his species isn't exactly "cut from the standard mold," and then, thankfully, the genitalia wackiness is over, as Zhaan tells Staan about Crichton and Aeryn's possible plight. Staan ascertains that they're not family, and clunkily says there's nothing worse than losing family. I'd say there's nothing worse than having your reproductive organs in your ears, but not having access to space travel, I may be a little provincial about the idea.

-- Page 4 --

Back on the non-family pod, Aeryn tells Crichton to work faster, Crichton complains about the schematics, and Aeryn sniffily betrays the depths of her Peacekeeper roots by dismissing what he's doing as "tech work." Crichton points out that such distasteful technical knowledge might save her life, and while I find myself in agreement with him, I'm more amazed that he's gotten so far into this predicament without making a reference to Triple-A. Crichton manages to redirect enough power from the auxiliary systems to launch a message buoy. Of course, it makes no sense that the Flax would drain only main power, and it also makes no sense that the message buoy would be able to move when the pod itself can't, but I've watched enough science fiction to know that it's not a genre you turn to for your daily dose of either logic or physics. In one of *Moya*'s corridors, D'Argo has discovered that Staan is wearing a pair of Luxan boots, and isn't pleased about it. Staan whines that the Zenetans killed the Luxan after he got caught in the Flax, and he only took the boots after they ejected his

body. He tried to get aboard the ship, but the Zenetans shot him in the arm. D'Argo tosses Staan in the brig and breathes that the ship Staan tried to loot was a Luxan deep-space voyager, and may contain some "map fibers" that D'Argo desperately needs. He asks if Staan can take him there. Staan gets all shifty, not realizing that those with sensitivity to arm pain might not want to get in between this crew and their quest to return to their own worlds. He tells D'Argo that the ship was earmarked for destruction and may not still exist, but D'Argo ignores that, saying that if Staan takes him there, everything on the ship outside the map fibers is his. I don't know why Staan would think the Zenetans would have left anything he'd be interested in, particularly since they were aware he knew about the ship, nor do I understand why he didn't go back and check it out after the Zenetans left if he did in fact think they'd leave anything, but that doesn't stop him from lustily staring at D'Argo and agreeing to the deal. After confirming that Staan can get them past the Flax, D'Argo lets him out of the brig.

Pod. Aeryn and Crichton are attempting to break free of the Flax. Crichton punches whatever needs to be punched, and we get our second PSA for seat belts before heading into another commercial break.

When we come back, Aeryn calls Crichton over, as she's got something heavy resting on her leg. He hands her an axe, and she frees herself. I think they could have stood to sell another fifteen-second spot here, if you take my meaning.

-- Page 5 --

On *Moya*, Zhaan informs D'Argo that she received a message from Aeryn. "It's short, but it's clear." All too rare on both counts. D'Argo informs her that they're about to launch as Rygel bitchs about... all the money Staan left behind? Okay. Zhaan gives him a look that could cut every precious stone he's got in front of him, and he nervously subsides.

Staan's ship launches as its pilot whoops, "Luxan voyager, here we come!" One hopes he remembered to turn the intercom off, as no one's really got time for the *awkward* around here. Inside, we see that Staan's ship is, not to put too fine a point on it, a shithole, and the only thing that stinks worse than all the junk cluttering it up are Staan's delusions that one day selling all of it will put him on Easy Street. This scene is boring, so the point is this: D'Argo wants to spend no more than an arm at the Luxan ship before going to rescue Aeryn and Crichton, which Staan is fine with, since the Zenetans won't be in a rush to loot such a small pod. I don't see what could go wrong with that plan, which probably makes me unsuitable for Peacekeeper flight training.

On the pod, we see that the attempt to escape has failed, as, according to Crichton, "some sort of field is holding us in place." See, I give him shit for being dumb, and then he goes and wows me with a detailed technical explanation like that. They ponder their next move, and Crichton offers that they could wait for the others to come rescue them. With impeccable comic timing, they look at each other, and then rush off to try something else. Hee. It's nice when a moment like that sneaks up on you.

Back on the Shiphole, Staan is offering D'Argo something unappetizing to eat, something wacky happens with the engines, and then Staan notices something that looks like a red TIE fighter on a display, which he says represents "Kcrackic's tracer beam," and further "explains" that Kcrackic is the "red mentor" to the Zenetans.

Gabba gabba whizzle. Shiz boink whoop. Oh, sorry, I was trying to make sense of all that. Anyway, Staanx reveals the incredible news that Kcrackic doesn't exactly have warm and fuzzy feeling toward him, which might have been more surprising if the Zenetans HADN'T SHOT AT HIM, and goes on that if Kcrackic learns of their presence, he'll seal the Flax up (sure, I totally understand what that means) and they'll never reach the Luxan ship or the pod. Anyway, they manage to escape the tracer beam, but Staanx realizes that Kcrackic is heading straight for *Moya*, so he urgently tells D'Argo to instruct his shipmates to act as though they've never seen him. That doesn't sound like much of a stretch, particularly not in Rygel's case.

-- Page 6 --

On *Moya*, Zhaan confirms that they will try to keep the pirates distracted. She signs off, and then, seeing Rygel burping up a cloud of smoke that seems perhaps to be more, um, "soothing" than I initially thought, sighs, "I will strive to keep them distracted." Don't be too tough on him, Zhaan. His puppeteer's probably stoned too. Establishing shot of a sleek ship approaching *Moya*, and then Kcrackic and a henchZenetan appear as Zhaan greets them and slings some crap about how his reputation for cruelty is well known. Kcrackic comes back that she's lucky their Leviathan is pregnant, as he once tried to commandeer a pregnant Leviathan, and eighty men died. Now that the small talk's over, Kcrackic asks after Staanx, whom Zhaan denies knowing, and then says he sees nothing of value, and is about to leave until Zhaan introduces Rygel. Rygel takes the opposite tack regarding the game than he did with Staanx, saying he's an excellent player, and he believes Kcrackic to be an easy mark. Zhaan surreptitiously glares at him, but then looks at Kcrackic with an apologetic "Hynerian Dominars will be Hynerian Dominars" look. Kcrackic smiles. Pod. Crichton discovers that their air supply has been compromised, and he'll need to fire up a welding torch to fix the problem, only there's too much pure oxygen in the pod at the moment to risk doing so. Aeryn suggests they put on their space suits and depressurize the cabin. Just then, Crichton hears something creaking on high, and is just quick enough to tackle Aeryn out of the way before a bulkhead or something collapses on the space they were just occupying. Crichton, of course, takes way too long to get up off of Aeryn, prompting her to ask, "Are you comfortable? Can I get you a pillow?" I know slang doesn't always translate, hon, but I don't think he's lacking for pillows at the moment. And they'll come in handy in the tent he just pitched. Anyway, chastened, he gets up.

Shiphole. Staanx tells the engines, "Sing for your Daddy," and that's not the first reference to Staanx being male, just for future reference. The scene is pointless until they get caught in the Flax, affording D'Argo a great opportunity for a baleful glare. Actually, it's a great opportunity to toss Staanx into the furnace, but even a hothead like D'Argo knows that that would be counterproductive to his situation.

On *Moya*, Rygel makes what looks like a nice move, only to have Kcrackic find an even better parry. Rygel looks like he's reached flop-sweat time, not, of course, that it's easy to tell.

-- Page 7 --

Crichton is starting to talk about how it'll be like a wind tunnel when they depressurize, like I'm sure Aeryn needs your simplistic metaphors, especially when she's just discovered that one of the helmets is broken, so they only have one working space



suit. Crichton: "So one of us gets to die." It's so easy to be negative, isn't it, Crichton? No, really, I'm asking.

Pod of DOOOOOOM. Aeryn and Crichton are both suited up, and Crichton is saying there's no way to test the welder before the depressurization, since cabin go boom and everything. Aeryn hands Crichton a nasty-looking needle gun that makes any hypodermic you've ever seen have some degree of, um, envy. She explains that it's loaded up with a "kill shot" that will stop her brain and heart functions, and then hands him another vial with a "nerve shot" that will bring her back. Crichton stammers a protest, but Aeryn isn't brooking any dissent, for three reasons: one, the kill and nerve shots were designed for Sebaceans; two, Crichton knows how to weld; and three, if she's unconscious she won't have to feel any emotions. As is often the case, the unstated reason is the strongest. However, in this case, it's quickly made irrelevant, as Crichton realizes the broken helmet is his, and the intact one won't fit him. That big skull really has never done anything for him. After a long moment of consideration, Aeryn asks what exactly she has to do and how much time she has. Crichton thinks his brain can last four minutes without oxygen, or five or six depending on body temperature. Aeryn suggests that sticking with an actual number might be a good idea in this particular case. Crichton is getting emotional, which he displays by handing Aeryn the torch. As you do.

*Moya.* Kcrackic appears to be winning, and the henchZenetan earns his SAG card in the most sycophantic way possible, but when he's gone, Rygel makes a "very unusual move," according to Kcrackic, so we're to think that "three squares ahead" job is Staanz's signature move. Rygel gives nothing away, even in the face of Kcrackic squintingly sizing him up. And that's always an amusing expression to pair with Rygel. Pod. Crichton is all nervous about the nerve shot, and Aeryn tells him they can't be sure it's going to work until he's dead. On the plus side, you probably don't have to spend a lot on her for Valentine's Day. She "encouragingly" tells him that Sebacean and human physiology seems similar enough, because warm- and cold-blooded creatures often have a lot in common biologically. This doesn't reassure Crichton, who decides to teach her CPR. She lies down, but we cut out before he fluffs up a pillow or two for her.

-- Page 8 --

Shiphole. Staanz tells D'Argo he can dissolve a small part of the Flax if they haven't changed the code, which makes a lot of sense, and then instructs him to whack the engine very hard on his signal. We then get far too much of Staanz, um, massaging another mechanical gizmo, and then they're suddenly clear of the Flax. This apparently is the signal for a lot of belly-baring and an attempted embrace with D'Argo that goes over about as well as [The Book Of Daniel](#) did with the Christian right. (Somehow, I'm surprised *Farscape* escaped their wrath. Interspecies romances don't seem like they'd be too, um, kosher.)

Off Staanz's assertion that "it doesn't get better than this," we cut to Aeryn massaging Crichton's chest. Heh. She counts off in an "I get this silly technique already" voice, but I think it just shows her military discipline that she's able to refrain from going through it one more time just for hot measure. Crichton is erring on the side of caution in giving Aeryn four minutes (180 microts, for those of you keeping a conversion index) and is also getting nervous and vulnerable as Aeryn prepares the kill shot, so

he talks about the human belief in the afterlife, and asks if Aeryn shares it. Aeryn: "Sebaceans believe when you die you die, you go nowhere, you see nothing." So that's a "no," then. Crichton tries to steel himself and fails, but Aeryn sincerely tells him, "I won't let you down, John." Man, the slightest bit of kindness on her part is enough to make my throat go a little tight. I'm glad we're not dating. Crichton is still resistant, saying it's going to hurt like crap, but Aeryn reassures him that that's not the case, and she injects him and suits herself up. They actually hold the suspense for about ten seconds until Crichton can't stand it any longer and starts to say that it wasn't so bad, which is of course the cue for the poison or whatever to kick in and cause him to flop around like an electrocuted walrus. Hee. Aeryn wastes no time in depressurizing the cabin.

On *Moya*, the henchZenetan returns to tell Kcrackic that their ship is ready to go. If I were him, seeing my boss spending hours playing a strategy game with a puppet would have been all I needed to mutinously go for a one-way joyride, but I never claimed to be normal. Anyway, it's Rygel's turn to bet, and he tries to get away with using *Moya* as his wager, which, amazingly, doesn't cause some eminently pungent secretion to come raining down on him. Zhaan, however, is upset, but Kcrackic reiterates that he's not touching a pregnant Leviathan with a ten-(convert "foot" to something appropriately silly) pole. Rygel instead wagers Staanz's whereabouts, causing Kcrackic to smile evilly.

-- Page 9 --

Aeryn welds away, nervously hearing from the onboard computer that she has under sixty microts left. Those things never bear good news.

Staanz tells D'Argo about the air coming from the pod. He grins that maybe this means they don't have to rush. Hey, dude, just because D'Argo's going off to find some map fibers instead of saving his dying friends doesn't mean... hmm. It's not too late to change my mind on that thought, is it?

Aeryn's down to her last ten microts. She finishes up and starts to walk across the room, but gets smacked out of consciousness by another flying thing dropping from the ceiling. I guess Crichton diving on top of her wasn't as gratuitous as it seemed. The ensuing breast-rest still seems a little overplayed, though.

Back from the break, Aeryn's still unconscious, and no word on the number of microts she's over the limit. The bright side is that Crichton's brain cells don't seem to utilize oxygen to the fullest at the best of times.

On *Moya*, Rygel makes a move that causes a holographic tower to appear over the board. He's all gloaty until Kcrackic makes a move that produces an entire city. At least getting one-upped can't be an uncommon experience for Rygel, given that he's two feet tall. Under the threat of death, Rygel gives up that Staanz is now with one of his shipmates, and they can locate him by following that shipmate's comm signal, the frequency of which is in the ship's database. If Kcrackic is wary of accessing a pregnant Leviathan's database, he doesn't say so, but maybe the henchZenetan does more around here than we realize.

On the pod, Aeryn finally comes to, and horrifiedly realizes that the vial containing the nerve shot has shattered. She wastes little time in hauling Crichton to the floor and performing CPR, causing a large part of the audience to curse the fact that fifteen pumps of his chest are necessary before it makes sense for her to put his lips on his.

The Shiphole finally reaches the Luxan wreck as D'Argo breathes that Aeryn and Crichton have a second reserve tank of oxygen, and as such could still be alive. Well, at least next time you see some air coming from their direction, you'll know for sure that they're toast. Dick. As they get closer, Staanx compliments their timing, as the ship is next in line for the melt, and I'd wonder who has the lovely job of keeping track of the order in this crapyard out in the middle of nowhere if I weren't kind of sick of this episode already. Up close, D'Argo identifies the ship as a "Luxan Assault Piercer," and says he dreamt of serving on one as a boy. Presumably one that was in considerably fewer pieces than the one before us. D'Argo seems to have a moment of indecision, seemingly brought on by thoughts of Aeryn and Crichton, but Staanx points out that this is D'Argo's chance to reunite with his real family, causing D'Argo to say, "My son," in a plaintive rumble. (If you want that name for your band, it's yours.)

-- Page 10 --

Aeryn is yelling at Crichton to come to. Hee. I'm sure I'd be doing the same, although I might be too lazy to be performing the CPR. Her stern exhortations work, though, as Crichton comes to, none the worse for wear aside from the incredible pain he endured from the kill shot, or at least that's his story. Aeryn's thrilled to bits until she has to tell him that she didn't finish the welding job, as his time was running out, so they only have half an arn of breathable atmosphere left. If I hadn't seen this plotline on every single science fiction episode I've ever watched (including *Star Trek: Voyager*, and I'm only admitting that because I love you) I'd be a lot more worried. I do quite enjoy these two, though, so I can't pretend it doesn't have some emotional resonance.

Kcrackic's ship flies away from *Moya*. On the Leviathan, Zhaan bitches Rygel out for giving up their secret, but it turns out Rygel pulled a double-cross -- he asked Pilot to change the comm frequency the minute Kcrackic stepped on board. I'd think that was a little unlikely given how stoned Rygel seemed, but then again, anyone who had as many servants as Rygel probably got bored enough to build up quite a tolerance to just about any sort of recreational drug. Pilot chimes in that he doesn't know where Kcrackic is headed, but it's far away. Zhaan cottons on that Rygel threw the game, and Rygel says it wasn't easy, as Kcrackic is an abominable player. At Zhaan's reaction, he notes, "Bluffing is what the game's all about." With this development, I'm just surprised "Rygel" or variants thereof aren't more popular as handles in online poker games. Not that I'd know.

In the pod of Tick Tick Tick, Crichton suggests that they could still be rescued, while Aeryn thinks their shipmates could have tried, failed, and given up already. Neither of them suggests that their plight is in second position to D'Argo's wacky adventures with a questionably gendered alien, which just goes to show you how early in the series we still are. Aeryn shiveringly notes that it's really cold, and that's a nice touch, since we know she's cold-blooded and all. (That comment was physiological, not editorial.)

Crichton makes another "Southernism," and Aeryn looks like she's going to ask and then is all, "I don't want this to be the last conversation I ever have."

Staanx babbles about how great it will be for D'Argo to get aboard the Luxan ship, but D'Argo's got a contemplative look on his face, so you get the idea that he might be having a crisis of conscience. The fact that there are only seven minutes left in the episode adds an element of likelihood to that notion. Staanx says D'Argo must be looking forward to seeing his son, but D'Argo rumbles, "Yes. But when I do, I want to

be able to look him in the eye." Even if you do save Aeryn and Crichton at this point, I'm not sure you're covering yourself in glory here, not that the swelling Music of Moral Dilemma Resolved agrees with me at all.

-- Page 11 --

As death approaches, Crichton and Aeryn reveal their cores, as the impossibly brave Crichton says Aeryn should have finished the repairs and left him to die, while the tragically human Aeryn says she chose not to do that because she'd be sitting there alone. Although I think most of this episode was pretty pointless, this scene is totally gut-wrenching, so all the usual props to these two. Aeryn is approaching "emotional wreck" at Hetch... whatever number is "really fast." She asks Crichton what he saw when he was technically dead, and he admits that all he saw was a void. He speculates that maybe he wasn't supposed to die in that moment, but Aeryn suggests that his real time is close at hand. They look at each other for a long moment, and the tension is thicker than Crichton's skull. Finally, Aeryn seizes the day and kisses Crichton, and soon they're on the ground starting to get out of their suits, until just as Aeryn is pulling part of her face gear over her head, they hear the noise of someone docking. So in one scene, we've got two people who have never been so happy to be walked in on, and at the same time, the same people never having been so pissed to have their lives saved. That's good stuff. The hatch opens and D'Argo enters, and after too little (read: none) explanation of how he and Staanx defeated the Flax and too much use of the Pan Flute of Wackiness in F, D'Argo suggests they leave...

... and when they walk into Staanx's ship, they see him chained to his chair. He suggests he and D'Argo be mates, in the non-Australian sense, as he's actually the female of "her" species. As I suggested before, whaaaaatever, except it's hilarious that this is happening in front of Aeryn and Crichton. Crichton makes a giggle-worthy comment about two hearts colliding, and D'Argo tries to eggshell-walk his way out of there as Staanx tells him "she" loves him. Hee.

We're safely back on *Moya*, as DRDs roam free and D'Argo contemplates just how confused he is at the moment. Zhaan appears, notes D'Argo's expression, and asks him what happened out there. If he sums it up in fewer than eleven pages, I'm gonna be hella pissed. D'Argo self-flagellates for his indecision, and Zhaan, for once, can't come up with a bit of Delvian bubble-gum wisdom, so D'Argo stalks off. I'm really not sure why they couldn't have saved Aeryn and Crichton and then gone to check out the Luxan ship. You might point out that that would only make a fifteen-minute episode, and I might counter that that would hardly be a problem from where I'm sitting.

-- Page 12 --

Elsewhere, Aeryn finds Crichton, and they're all about saying their judgment was impaired by the pure oxygen and imminent demise, as if not wanting to hook up with either of these two isn't the most deviant behavior of any corner of the galaxy. After an exchange that the translator microbes would loosely define as "*Un! Comfortable!*," Crichton jokingly asks if Aeryn is the female of her species. She gives him a look that scorches his eyebrows, which he takes as a yes, and then leaves, pleased with himself. He should be more pleased with the fact that a Sebacean throwing star (if there isn't such a thing, there should be) doesn't lodge itself in the back of his head. When he's gone, Aeryn smiles to herself. My closing thought is that she must have pulled a few muscles in her face holding that in for so long.

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<http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/show/farscape/rhapsody-in-blue/>

## - Reality Bites -

-- Page 1 --

Couple things before I start: I'd like to thank the *Farscape* posters for buying me the first-season DVD set after I [recapped "Premiere."](#) Also, I'm aware that I referred to a certain character as "Zhann" instead of the correct "Zhaan." I blame Ben Browder for pronouncing her name like it should be followed with the words "of Green Gables." And before you get too stuck on that mental picture, let's settle into the episode. Red roses are in the foreground as we open with Crichton declaring to some blonde underneath him, "You are the tastiest thing that I have had since last night." Considering that he's (a) Crichton, and (b) shirtless, it probably goes without saying that the feeling is mutual. They make out for a bit until Crichton realizes that something else is on the blonde's mind, and she tells him she's taking "the Stanford job." Crichton rolls off the blonde, no doubt able to recognize "the Stanford job" as meaning "something that means we will no longer be having sex on even a semi-regular basis." He is a rocket scientist, you know. Anyway, the blonde, "Alex," is getting a full scholarship in California while Crichton's got a shot at the space program in Florida. Also, Alex's bags are clearly already packed, so as he turns away from her, she tells him that she'll always be there for him, a thought that we know Crichton will latch onto in a delusional state. Hard to believe that Crichton losing mental faculties is a theme that's still relatively new at this point in the series. Anyway, we pan down to see a couple of half-full champagne glasses and a box with a wedding ring in it. He dejectedly closes the box, and then puts on a brave face and sighs, "Well, if we're meant to be together, we'll be together." It's just as well it's ending now, Crichton. If you couldn't hack a bi-coastal relationship, you really would have had some problems once this show started. Alex smiles and tells him she loves him, and he returns the thought. They kiss and roll toward the camera...

... and in a nice cut, Crichton gets pitched out of his bed on *Moya*. He sleeps in his boxer briefs and nothing else, by the way, and thanks to whatever spatial phenomenon is tossing him around the room like a rag doll and making that abundantly clear. He finally steadies himself and runs out...

... and on the bridge, we see that *Moya* is in starburst. As Crichton, not dressed, appears on the bridge, Pilot whines to D'Argo that he doesn't have any answer for them. He doesn't add that he might be doing better for them if he had that extra arm they cut off a few episodes ago, an incident I'm sure I'd be taking every reasonable opportunity to remind them of and then some. Crichton notes that the starburst is taking quite a bit longer than normal, and Rygel snarks, "Hail, Prince of the Obvious." This may be one of those episodes where I like him. Aeryn and Zhaan appear as *Moya* finally comes out of starburst, and Pilot, via Clamshell Cam, informs them that *Moya* herself initiated the process, as she thought she heard the distress call of another pregnant Leviathan. I think *Moya* just wants a sympathetic ear so she can bitch about the band of freaks she has to cart around. Again, that's just what I'd do. Rygel makes a comment not overly noteworthy except for the fact that it tells us he

has multiple wives, a revelation over which Crichton gives him a high-five. Yes, Crichton, you certainly were cavalier enough about the institution of marriage when you were trying to stop the tears from dripping into your cheap champagne.

-- Page 2 --

Anyway, Rygel babbles a bit more, and then Crichton notices that Aeryn is wearing a pair of his Calvins. D'Argo doesn't seem interested in Crichton's underwear, and I may not be all that familiar with this show, but I think I'm aware enough to know that that's probably a surprise to a lot of people. D'Argo informs the sleepy gang that he was dreaming of the last night he spent with his wife before she was murdered. Crichton says that was his dream, and happily they don't drag out the obligatory "You dreamt about my wife?" joke for more than two seconds before Crichton clarifies that he dreamt of someone he cared about. He asks the girls if they woke up wet, basically, and Aeryn, amused, says she sleeps soundly, while Zhaan sniffs, "I am unimpressed by your masculine reveries." Looks like it's been a while since someone experienced [the fourth sensation](#). Zhaan asks Pilot about the Leviathan, and is informed that there isn't another ship, but they are receiving a transmission from a nearby planet. The group looks at the monitor and sees a female Delvian with wavy bluish-white hair pop up and apologize for the deception, and explain there was no other way their signal could reach across the void. I'd complain that that makes no sense, but it's not like her word is going to prove to mean a whole lot anyway. She goes on that "[they]" so wanted to meet "Pa'u Zotoh Zhaan." Zhaan misses her opportunity to say "I haven't heard that name in a long time," but maybe she's not an Alec Guinness fan. She is weird, after all. Instead, she just stares at the monitor, not wholly pleased, as we head into the opening credits.

Establishing shot of *Moya* above the planet. On the surface, the female Delvian -- whose name we'll soon learn is "Pa'u Tahleen" -- is explaining that when they landed, their ship heated up the surface rock to the point where it became molten, and the bulk of it submerged, all by design. Zhaan explains that Tahleen is part of a missionary group as Aeryn appreciatively notes that the setup decreases the likelihood that the ship will be seen from space. Tahleen notes that it's instructive how different cultures view the same situation differently -- where Aeryn sees defense from attack, she sees solitude for piety. And where Tahleen sees gentle wisdom, I see irritating condescension. Fascinating! If you watch Aeryn as the two Delvians move away, though, she gives a dismissive shake of her head, making the entire exchange worthwhile. Zhaan asks, if they're so pious, what was up with the deception to bring them there, and Tahleen breezes that their isolation probably contributed to an error in judgment. Given later events, they must have been isolated an awfully long time. She suggests that they all chill out at the "Altar of Essence," which has sweet air, unlike the toxic surface. Crichton grouches, and somewhere nearby, we see a male Delvian with a metal rake watching them with a concerned expression on his face. I'd be concerned too if I thought I was going to have to clean up after this group.

-- Page 3 --

Inside the ship, Tahleen welcomes them to the "New Moon of Delvia," their "modest temple to the goddess of spiritual renewal." Crichton looks down the back of Aeryn's pants and is dismayed to see she has a weapon with her, which is apparently strictly *verboten*. I think he's just worried she's accidentally going to blow a hole in his



precious designer underwear. Tahleen graciously says she heard they were low on supplies, and introduces another female Delvian, "Lorana," whom she says will show Crichton to their food source. As they take in the temple, which has a shallow little pool in the center, Crichton whispers that it's so perfect, his teeth ache. Aeryn hisses, "That's from all the sincerity." Hee. Looks like Aeryn's sarcasm detector is coming along. A few episode ago, she probably would just have stuck a [dentic](#) in his mouth, not that that wouldn't have been hilarious as well. Elsewhere, Zhaan, still not ready to let it go, asks why Tahleen lured them there. Tahleen says she already knows, but Zhaan denies that. "What I do know is you invaded my soul last night and you left me bitter." This brand of sincerity feels a little different. Tahleen notes that her friends were happy with their "remembrances," the implication being that whatever made Zhaan bitter was a memory of hers as well. Also, I don't know how thrilled Crichton was to get dumped, but maybe they had some mind-blowing goodbye sex that we didn't get to see.

Back at the little pool, Crichton pulls something out that he says is "part plant, part animal." It looks like all plant to me, specifically the rubber plant, but I'm not the props guy here. Anyway, Aeryn is unimpressed with the food source and even more so with the place in general, what with all the peace and serenity. "It amazes me how people mistake theosophy for superiority." God, I love her. Crichton goes off on one of his "the universe is an endlessly fascinating treasure trove" speeches, and despite Aeryn's nature, it's clear that she's learned a thing or two about patience if she can sit through Crichton's recitation of "Ode on a Squid Calamari Cucumber." Crichton babbles on about how great the ship is, unaware that Tahleen and Zhaan are now watching them. Zhaan says she can't help Tahleen, so Tahleen asks her for the power to help themselves. Zhaan asks when the "madness" started, and Tahleen replies that it was recent, "but already Pa'u Tuzak is beyond redemption." The point of this conversation is that Tahleen knows that Zhaan beat her dark side. "So how does the pious Zhaan coexist with all that rage?" Zhaan does not say, "By cutting the arms off my shipmates whenever I get a chance." I'd think I need to let this go, if it hadn't happened only THREE EPISODES AGO. Tahleen asks Zhaan to save her, and in return, "I will show you paths to abilities beyond your comprehension." Nothing could go wrong with that plan. Tahleen sees Crichton pulling out still another squalamucumber, and closes her eyes, sending Crichton into a memory...

-- Page 4 --

... of when he was a little boy and he used to look at water snakes. His mother yells at him to come away before he falls in...

... and back in the present, Crichton looks out of it as Tahleen takes Zhaan's hand, apparently sharing the vision with her...

... and young Crichton does indeed fall into the water, where he thrashes about and calls for his mother...

... until back in the present, Crichton snaps out of the vision with a start, followed by Zhaan doing the same. Aeryn somewhat hilariously draws her weapon as Zhaan realizes that Tahleen altered Crichton's memory, and orders her to put Crichton back the way he was. Sure, okay.

Nearby, Crichton is trying to shake off the memory tampering when Aeryn finds him and announces, "You are *the* most bizarre creature I have ever met." My guess is that she doesn't watch dailies.

On *Moya*, D'Argo tells Rygel that he's worried there's some Delvian trickery going on, what with them all having the same dream, and they should leave. Rygel instructs him to get the food first, as he's only crapped out an eighth of his body weight so far today. In the temple, Crichton is looking at an enormous twisting object when the male Delvian from outside startles him. "Do not touch the Sanctity Root." ["Please tell me I'm not the only one who thought of 'the Honesty Stone' and started snickering just now." -- Sars] Considering how often Crichton acts like a twelve-year-old, I'm amazed he refrained from giggling, especially as the guy goes on that it's "poison to [his] hand." He introduces himself as "Tuzak: Teacher-Leader-Holy Reaper-Seeker of the Flame." Well, he may not be beyond redemption, but if that's how he introduces himself, he's certainly beyond boring. He goes on that he's insane because of Crichton. "Because I touched inside what I needed to touch you outside." I think he means that the power he tapped into to invade the minds of the *Moya* crew caused his madness, but I'll admit that his way of saying it, while more vague, certainly sounds hotter. Anyway, Crichton looks mildly uncomfortable, as he's only got the no-doubt-familiar idea that someone's hitting on him, but then Tuzak tells him Zhaan is in peril. Unfortunately, he leaves with only this reminder: "Do not touch the Root." Fine, if no one's going to giggle, I won't hee hee hee.

Aeryn's lurking somewhere when a younger male Delvian, "Hasko," gives her shit about her weapon. Aeryn's not fazed, and I'm not surprised, especially given that the guy looks and sounds like he'll be hopping on with *Cirque Du Soleil* as soon as they make it to his corner of the galaxy. Anyway, the guy mentioning that Peacekeepers drove him from Delvia is enough to get Aeryn to leave, and when she's gone, he tells the aforementioned Lorana that they're far outside their vows. Jeez, something's rotten in the New Moon of Delvia. We get it. Anyway, Lorana says that she and Tahleen share Unity now, and she won't beard for him any more -- I mean, "listen to his jealousy."

-- Page 5 --

Zhaan and Tahleen are starting some ritual when Crichton barges in with the news about Aeryn. Zhaan already knows that she's gone back to *Moya*, as Zhaan wanted her to, and what's more, she needs Crichton to help her make a decision. By the way, Tahleen mentions in this scene that they don't know how to get back to Delvia, so her ostensible reason for wanting Zhaan's power -- the desire to free Delvia from the Peacekeepers -- seems even more suspect. Zhaan explains that she dreamt the other night as well, also of the last person she loved, and says that Crichton needs to open his mind. Tahleen wonders if that's a good idea, as his "capacity" is well below even that of a "Level One." Well, it's not like comments about Crichton's diminished capacity are anything new. And this is only my second recap. Zhaan is sure that Crichton will understand, and urgently instructs Tahleen to show him. Tahleen fixes Crichton with a look...

... and in flashback, Zhaan and her lover, "Bitaal," are holding each other's heads with their hands as Zhaan recites the Unity ritual. All seems well until Zhaan reveals that Bitaal betrayed their world, presumably to the Peacekeepers, and she kills him with

her mental and physical powers on the spot. Hate it when that happens. Zhaan cries in anguish...

... and in the present, Crichton snaps out of it and is shocked. "You killed the guy you were having sex with!" Interesting that he focuses on that, instead of the idea that she also presumably killed the guy she loved. If I said that it disturbed me that Crichton places a high value on sex, however, I'd be lying. Anyway, Zhaan pleads that she needs him. Crichton: "For what? Target practice?" Hey, Crichton got off a good one! Well, for him, anyway. Zhaan says she needs the judgment of someone she trusts, and him to understand. Crichton asks, if she wants understanding, why she showed him that memory. Zhaan: "Because they want me to do it again." Well, in fairness, Crichton, you did ask.

Zhaan explains that Bitaal was their "spiritual counselor," but when his term was up, instead of yielding power, he and the other "conservative Pa'us" hired the Peacekeepers for external security, changing Delvia forever. Damn, people using religion to further their own personal power and glory. Good thing that only happens in fiction. Zhaan goes on that the Peacekeepers rounded up all liberals and voices of protest, and her own father was sent to an asteroid camp. She explains that as Delvians train for purity, they often become vulnerable to their own dark impulses, and if the impulses surface, they succumb to them as to an infection. However, were Zhaan to enter into Unity (the "sacred surrender of two minds together") with Tahleen, she could teach Tahleen to overcome the madness, allowing her to lead the liberals against the Peacekeepers. I probably shouldn't go into such detail, as all this is kind of a crock of shit anyway, but then I realized if people had never recapped crocks of shit, TWoP would never have come into being. ["Yeah, pull up a chair and tell me about it."

-- Sars]

-- Page 6 --

On *Moya*, Rygel is babbling to Aeryn about the virtues of the squalamucumber until Aeryn backhands him and his Thronesled into a wall. Heh. After comparing notes, D'Argo and Aeryn decide to head back to the planet, and Rygel says he'll tag along. In the temple, Hasko informs Lorana and Tahleen that Aeryn and D'Argo intend to return. I'm surprised Aeryn announced this to the Delvians. Not that it likely would have made a difference, but still. Tahleen says they must be stopped, so as not to distract Zhaan. She instructs the two underlings to attack Crichton's, D'Argo's, and Aeryn's minds "with their own hopes and fears." She leaves, and the underlings are none too pleased.

Crichton's sitting somewhere in the temple when Alex comes marching up. He asks who the hell she is. Under further questioning, she explains that she never went to Stanford, but instead joined the space program. At that moment, Crichton gets a fake memory of Alex in an IASA uniform. It's too bad the fake memory couldn't have included a more flattering hairstyle for Alex, but who am I to tell the superior Delvians what to do? As Crichton gets his patented "somewhat drunk-looking and therefore dumber than usual" look on his face, another fake memory gives Crichton the idea that Alex was his co-pilot on the mission.

Outside, crazy old Tuzak is poking around with his rake when Zhaan finds him. They each affirm that they know who the other one is. Between the closed-captioning and the recap, I sure as hell hope so. Tuzak is tending the "orchard," which only contains

dead-looking wood, but as he explains, "sanctity roots don't grow on trees." That's Tuzak for you, ladies and gentlemen. Fortunately, I've seen the rest of the episode, and I can guarantee he won't be here all week. After affirming that Zhaan is a "ninth-level" Pa'u, he tells her that experiencing the darkness is normal, but when you reach down to pull it up, that's when there's trouble. Zhaan asks if she should give Tahleen what she wants, but his answer is infuriatingly, if predictably, equivocal. Inside the temple, a milky-eyed Hasko chants as Tahleen waits. On *Moya*, the chanting is audible as D'Argo grabs his sword and instructs Rygel to come after them if he hears nothing. Rygel: "Yes, of course. My thought exactly." Heh. They're ready to go, but suddenly Aeryn drops her pulse rifle, and we see she's under the illusion that it's fallen apart. They argue for a little too long until D'Argo cottons on and asks Pilot if any Delvian transmissions are coming to *Moya*. Before we hear a reply, however, D'Argo hears the anguished cries of his son, Jothee. Jothee may be a kid, but he still sounds like kind of a wuss for a Luxan. D'Argo stands up and sees a Peacekeeper bustle Jothee away, and orders Pilot to seal all the exits as he goes chasing after the vision. Aeryn asks Rygel for help, but he suddenly shrinks to a tiny percentage of his normal size. Well, it's not like he can afford that, but perhaps there will be a plus side and his ego will shrink accordingly. He's got a little more to spare in that department.

-- Page 7 --

Zhaan has decided to share Unity with Tahleen, although the latter cautions that Zhaan can't have the slightest bit of doubt. Given what's to come, I assume that means that the transfer will be unsuccessful if Zhaan isn't one hundred percent committed to what she's doing. I'm surprised she doesn't have any misgivings, considering it took her about a year to come to this decision. They take each other's head in their hands and touch foreheads...

... and then we see a vision of their two essences coming together. All seems well at first, but once the transfer begins, Zhaan appears to be in pain. Tahleen apologizes, but says that what Zhaan has learned will take her too long to master on her own, so she's taking all her restraint, or knowledge, or knowledge of restraint, or whatever. (Don't email me.) I'm starting to think this Unity thing isn't all it's cracked up to be.

Zhaan cries out some more...

... and then the Unity breaks, and Tahleen stands tall as Zhaan looks at her with red eyes and snarls that Tahleen betrayed her. It's too bad I'm watching this on DVD, because I'd love to see if Visine cleverly bought time in the imminent commercial break.

Zhaan's moping somewhere in the temple when Crichton finds her and asks her what's up with the eyes. Zhaan, with bitter humor, says it's tissue burn migrating to her brain. Crichton does not say, "Boy, I know what *that's* like." Sorry, I'll stop now. (Heh, right.) Zhaan goes on that Tahleen took her ability to control her dark impulses, and what's more, she can't just take them back from Tahleen -- she'd have to start from scratch to regain her discipline. Crichton starts to give her a pep talk, but Zhaan grabs him and snarls that it took her seventeen cycles to master her impulses last time, and she doesn't have the strength to start again. Considering the way she's manhandling Crichton, she might be underestimating herself here. Crichton regards her warily, but asks her to stay where she is.

Cut to Crichton trying to track down Tahleen. He comes across "Alex," who tries to distract him with kisses and a minor guilt trip about how he's always there for other people before he's there for her. She also asks if he remembers when they "made love in the reflecting pool at Canaveral." Given that he doesn't seem to get a false memory here, I hope the water was chlorinated. Crichton ignores "Alex" long enough to learn from Pilot that everyone is behaving rather strangely. From the look on Crichton's face, he seems to be picking up on the implicit "for them" at the end of the sentence.

-- Page 8 --

Speaking of, D'Argo's harassing Pilot to help him find his son, Aeryn's amusingly flummoxed by something technical, and Rygel, somewhere off-screen, still thinks he's the Napoleon of Hyneria. Well, even more so than usual. Crichton breaks away from "Alex," who poutily sighs. Zzzzz.

Crichton finally finds Tahleen, who tells him there are a billion Delvians living in fear, but Crichton doesn't want to hear it, saying that what she's doing is about power, not freedom. Fair point. He suggests Tahleen set things right, but when he's gone, she instructs Lorana to incapacitate him. Lorana doesn't see the harm in letting him go, but Tahleen says Zhaan held something back, and she didn't get enough to quell the madness. You know, this madness really doesn't seem so bad here, considering how everyone seems to be strolling around going about their daily routines. Then again, I see a lot of people for whom madness is part of their daily routine, but I do live in the East Village. When Tahleen's gone, Hasko warns Lorana that Tahleen will forge another Unity with Zhaan and probably kill her in the process. Crichton may have some competition for that "Prince of the Obvious" title here. Hasko sweeps out of the room, and Lorana looks picturesquely worried.

Crichton's walking around the temple. For a place that's supposed to be a sanctuary, people really don't seem to sit down and chill out a whole lot. "Alex" pops up and bitches at Crichton, holding up her ring, which is a mistake, since Crichton remembers he never gave it to her. Except, of course, another false memory pops up, wherein she's scared because she turned down Stanford, so Crichton asks "Alexandra Kimberly O'Connor" to marry him. In the present, "Alex" does aghast pretty well, and as Crichton stammeringly digs himself deeper, another false memory, this one of their wedding, pops up. Considering how much Crichton doesn't remember, he must think he had one hell of an imaginary bachelor party. Anyway, "Alex" succeeds in distracting Crichton from helping Zhaan. She'd really bug me if it weren't for her uncanny ability to get Crichton's shirt off.

Outside in the "orchard," we learn that Tuzak is Tahleen's father, he disapproves of the way she's gathering power, and Delvian women treat their fathers much as they treat their lovers. On the plus side, now Tuzak can fertilize all those sanctity roots that seem to be having a hard time growing. By the way, Tahleen's eyes are now red as well, but that could be from all the toxic dust as easily as from the patricide.

-- Page 9 --

In the temple, Tuzak's laid out to rest, or whatever, and Zhaan's doing the same by lounging with her head on his legs. Well, it's not like he's in a position to mind. Crichton appears, apparently having gotten away from "Alex," and Zhaan tells him she plans to join in Unity with Tahleen once again. Crichton calls her out, saying she's

going to try to kill Tahleen. Zhaan: "You were always the most clever one on *Moya*." She must be feeling some really dark impulses to be able to make fun of him like that. Crichton gets nowhere with Zhaan, so he leaves...

... and then "Alex" finds him at the Sanctity Root and asks him why Zhaan's so important to him. If the deceitful Delvians were cleverer, they'd give him some false memories to make Zhaan look bad. Like, for example, cutting off one of their shipmate's arms, or perhaps murdering her lover. Speaking of which, I don't really understand why Zhaan was so anxious to get home to Delvia as to cut off Pilot's arm if Delvia is currently lousy with Peacekeepers. Anyway, Hasko's pissy queening has apparently finally gotten through to Lorana, as "Alex" confesses that she's simply a figment of Crichton's imagination. Crichton's head is so screwy that he doesn't believe her, so "Alex" morphs into Lorana as she tells him, "I release you from what is not true." Some part of Crichton has to be wondering if that means there really aren't any anthropomorphic Muppets. Lorana abjectly apologizes for all the deception, and adds: "Whilst in your mind, you have showed me the ember of my own virtue." Some sentences are hard to take at face value. She goes on that if Crichton is willing to take the risk, he may similarly be able to show Zhaan her goodness.

On *Moya*, Hasko is telling the crew that he lifted the spell, but they can't come down to the temple because of the delicate balance therein, or something. D'Argo, no strong believer in delicacy at the best of times, allows Hasko two arms. That's two more than I would have expected, but that might be because I have no idea what the hell an "arm" even is. (I don't need to say it, do I?)

Lorana and her newfound conscience go to see Tahleen, who scornfully tells her she was "easy and pleasurable." I've been called worse. Lorana considers a moment, and then informs Tahleen that Crichton and Zhaan have fled to the surface in an attempt to return to *Moya*. Tahleen buys this and rushes off, leaving Lorana to look pleased with herself.

Zhaan heads to the appointed place to see Tahleen, only to find Crichton there instead, who informs her he'll be taking Tahleen's place in the ritual. Zhaan thinks Unity will kill him, but Crichton tells her he understands that if she chooses to protect him, he'll survive. Zhaan starts to move away, but Crichton clucks at her, and when she turns back, he asks, "Your translator microbes handle that one?" Heh. Zhaan replies: "I must admit, I have always wondered what could possibly go on in there." She's thinking pretty clearly for a madwoman. Crichton does pretty well with his comeback of "Not a lot. I'm a guy." Anyway, soon their heads are each other's hands...

-- Page 10 --

... and, Unity. All seems to be going well until Crichton recoils at seeing the depths of Zhaan's soul. Crichton shivers in fear, but Zhaan calmly instructs him not to absorb any of her rage. She thinks it's time to separate, as she doesn't know how much longer she can shield him, but he insists that she look at the way he sees her. The Music of All's Right With The World swells as Crichton tells her all the beautiful things he sees in her. Zhaan takes in what Crichton's telling her...

... and then they suddenly break apart and fall to the floor. Crichton's okay, but Zhaan takes a few moments to come back to consciousness. She eventually sits part of the way up and looks at Crichton with red eyes, but he exhorts her to fight her demons, and her eyes start to go back and forth between blue and red. She then collapses



again, and Crichton moves to her and puts her head in his lap. She slowly opens her eyes again, and they're blue. They both look like they're going to cry as she thanks him, but it could be because of the swelling of the overwrought music again. Still, awwwww. That was nice.

Crichton's hacking away at the Sanctity Root with a small axe as Zhaan tells him that the memory of Unity is transitory. Tahleen and the other SAG Delvians rush up, and Tahleen focuses her powers on Crichton, but Zhaan blocks her assault and informs her enemy that thanks to Unity with Tahleen, she's now a tenth level Pa'u, and as such has the power to protect. I guess her hit points are going to go up too. (Like you're surprised I'm a geek?) With Tahleen no longer a threat, Crichton finishes his assault on the root, and the room starts to shake. Tahleen turns to Zhaan and pleadingly tells her they want the same things. Zhaan gives a long response that can be summed up as, "Um, not." She leaves the room, and Crichton, after stopping to exchange a warm touchy goodbye with Lorana, follows.

But first, Zhaan has to go through the motions of leaving her Pa'u vestments behind, as she feels she's no longer worthy of them. If murdering her lover wasn't enough to make her ditch them, I'm not sure why this would put her over the edge, but logic is a rare commodity in this part of the galaxy, along with other qualities such as "sanity" and "non-Muppetness." Anyway, Zhaan tells Crichton that she is a once and future, but not present, Pa'u. Crichton opines that it's a shame to waste all those cycles of training, but Zhaan demurs, saying they weren't a waste, but the best cycles of her life. Given that they were spent in prison, if I were Crichton, I'd take that as an insult. That is, if I were Crichton but had at least the intelligence of an average human. (Okay, I'll really stop now, but only because it's the end of the recap.) See you next time!

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## - Next Time, Just Count To Ten -

-- Page 1 --

We open on a cloud of steam, and then it dissipates to reveal Crichton and D'Argo. HoYay aficionados, make of that what you will. They're somewhere in *Moya's* bowels trying to fix some problem, and Crichton whiningly asks why these things are always his fault, prompting D'Argo grumpily to correct him that they're merely *almost* always his fault. I suppose that makes sense -- Aeryn's too competent to cause problems, Zhaan's too peaceful, and Rygel's too lazy. Good thing for Crichton that Chiana's going to be showing up soon. They succeed only in releasing a cloud of foul-smelling gas, and Crichton exposit that the "blockage" they're trying to fix is a by-product of *Moya's* pregnancy, while D'Argo blames Crichton for firing *Farscape One's* engines in the transport hangar. Crichton further exposit that that was the last of his fuel, so now he's completely dependent on Leviathan technology, and then, having had enough bickering, stomps off...

... only to run into Zhaan, who asks if anything's wrong. Crichton says he's fed up, and then they have an all-too-typical translator microbe mix-up, causing Crichton to snit, "It was vaguely -- *vaguely* amusing the first six billion times." Here's an expression that

won't be hard to translate: Says you. Crichton proceeds to bite Zhaan's head off for no reason...

... and then, suited up, he's telling Aeryn that he's going for a drive. She tries to comprehend what he's on about, but understandably fails, given that they probably don't have an expression for "riding a wild hair" in Sebacean. Seriously, this behavior of Crichton's is underdeveloped and kind of preposterous fourteen episodes in, but I suppose we can cheat a bit and just add it in to the seventeen billion times in the series that he's completely out of his gourd. D'Argo yells that he needs Crichton, as "this backwash is building up too fast," but Crichton is unmoved, and we cut to him flying away.

On the bridge, Rygel's amusing himself with a game when D'Argo and Zhaan stride in. The former tells us that *Moya* is experiencing "an extreme increase in her amnexus systems," and Pilot explains that she thinks her fetus is at risk for some reason, and she's "decompensating." The crew recoils in horror as they realize that that means *Moya* is about to starburst. Zhaan frantically instructs Pilot to get Crichton back on board, but he tells her there's no time...

... and outside, Crichton is quite close to *Moya* when he sees the blue lines of starburst coming toward him. In a matter of seconds, he gets knocked away, and *Moya* is gone. He mutters, "I am a dead man." And he hasn't even met Scorpius yet. Credits.

-- Page 2 --

Fade up on an idyllic-looking lake. The fact that Crichton is lounging shirtless on top of his ship does nothing to make it less so. He's grown a beard, so we're to assume some time has passed. If you're a *Star Trek: TOS* fan, I can only imagine the serenity of the surroundings brings to mind that God-awful episode "[The Paradise Syndrome](#)." Although it does make me giggle to think of Crichton chomping on the scenery and bellowing, "I AM KIROK!" Anyway, as we get closer, we observe that Crichton's beard is quite long but very neatly trimmed, and we also see that he's constructed a lean-to on the beach, and some sort of spear trap connected to a fishing line. He gets a bite, the spear launches into the water, and he wades out and triumphantly retrieves some sort of enormous crab-like creature. A pretty woman (the actress is from Hong Kong, for reference) appears and badly says she wasn't sure whom to bet on. He offers to share the catch with her, and is told that in her neck of the woods, "the offering of food by a man to a woman signals his fondness for her." Well, on the plus side, the ugly women don't have to number obesity on their list of problems.

Crichton is unfazed both by the custom and the woman's horrible acting, and upon asking what she has in her hand, is told it's a map of the skies. He's reluctant to take it, undoubtedly because he doesn't want to be reminded of his wealth of scientific and technical knowledge, particularly since all he can do with it at the moment is to decimate the local shellfish population. After some painfully pouty faces from "Lisala," though, he relents, looks at it, and tells her it's beautiful. She asks him to show her where his homeworld is, and he makes a grand show of a physical demonstration with a rock that translates roughly to "hell and gone from here." A big black (no idea if he's a [Sex Cop](#)) guy dressed in the same overly mauve garb as Lisala appears on the scene, and we are able to infer very quickly that he's her S.O., but she finds him wanting, especially compared to Crichton. I can't imagine where I've seen a similar

plotline on a science-fiction show. (That would probably be more convincing if the reference to "The Paradise Syndrome" weren't still on my page.) Anyway, Lisala leaves in a huff, and the dude, "Rokon," gives Crichton shit for killing a baby giant enormous crab. He also gets jealous of the map, saying Lisala's never given him a gift like that before. Obviously there are things in the relationship that are failing to satisfy her. And between the rather aesthetically pleasing way he's built and what little we've learned about the local customs, I can only logically conclude that he's one shitty cook. Rokon tells Crichton he'll never go home, and Crichton gets that starry-eyed look on his face as he says he thinks he's okay with being there forever. Rokon isn't so thrilled about that prospect, but informs Crichton that some dude wants to see him, and that Crichton should arrive by high sun.

-- Page 3 --

*Moya*. We quickly are able to infer that the crew has been searching all the inhabitable planets in the area, with no luck. Also, we know that [Moya must restore her energy reserves after starburst](#), so it makes sense that Crichton would have disappeared before they could return. Look at me, explaining simple points of *Farscape* to you all. That's like me telling [Sars](#) that James Van Der Beek has bad hair and worse crying skills. Uncharacteristically, D'Argo is optimistic that the planet they're approaching fits with Crichton's last known trajectory, while Zhaan, quite as uncharacteristically, is ready to give up, given that they've already spent three months (a quarter of a cycle, if you prefer) searching. Interestingly, Zhaan blames Crichton for leaving during "a time of crisis," while D'Argo feels it's their fault for driving him to it, and calls Zhaan "cold." No, D'Argo, that's Aeryn. Pay attention. Zhaan says that while she still cares about "Crichton" (and again, interesting that in this state of mind she uncommonly refers to him by his surname), they're in danger of being discovered by the Peacekeepers, and besides, the only thing driving the search is "the guilt in your own hearts." D'Argo counters, "My hearts are private places. Stay out of them." I wonder if they altered D'Argo's anatomy just for the sake of that line. Regardless, hee. That was funny. Zhaan hopefully -- if misguidedly in my view -- solicits Aeryn's vote as the tiebreaker, but Aeryn votes to press on with the search, so Zhaan stomps off. When she's gone, Aeryn cautions D'Argo that "there will come a time when we may have to acknowledge that Crichton has met his destiny, and we are just not part of it." That's an awfully pretty way of putting it, considering that from their point of view of what could have happened to Crichton, a quick and painless death ranks as pretty desirable on the list. D'Argo guilt-trippily agrees.

Village, where everyone's doing just fine without technology. Crichton strides in with a local vest adorning his shorts and t-shirt. In the foreground of one shot, we see a rock outcropping that Will Be Important Later, and then Crichton is stepping into the village chief's hut and speaking some local expression of greeting. I could say something about this making no sense, given that it seems highly unlikely that the locals have translator microbes, but I was on the phone for an hour with Sprint this morning, so I'm already over my daily quota of beating my head against the wall. The chief, who clearly is fond of Crichton, kicks his guards out and invites Crichton to sit. Crichton warily notes that he's asking him to sit beside him, and his tone suggests that this command is code for the suggestion of something unbecoming a societal leader, unless said leader is Caligula. But no, it turns out that Crichton is reluctant because sitting

beside the chief is a privilege he only affords to his best hunters, and Crichton doesn't wish to dishonor them. However, the chief wryly points out that refusing would dishonor him, so Crichton takes his place. The chief says they have much to discuss, starting with Lisala, who of course according to the conventions of television is his daughter, and who also happens to be giggling outside with a gaggle of girlfriends. "You see the way she comes alive when she looks at you?" Well, no, I don't see that, but a good casting director is probably hard to find this far out into space. Crichton tells the chief, "Kato-Re," that he only wants to be friends with Lisala, and he chose to build his home away from the village because he didn't want to interfere with their society. Kato-Re says that their traditions dictate that the female chooses her life mate. "It may be out of your hands, my dear Crichton." This guy may be supposed to be friendly, but he's coming off skeezy. I mean, there's manly bonding, but when it crosses into "[Bone my daughter, PLEASE](#)" territory, it's time to look at the nearest sundial and be all, "I didn't realize it was so late!"

-- Page 4 --

Outside, Rokon is sourly observing Crichton's and Kato-Re's chumminess. He's with a woman we'll soon learn is his mother. We quickly find that she's some sort of power-hungry high priestess who wants Rokon to be the next chief, and as such eggs him on to make sure that no one stands between his marriage to Lisala. He stomps off in a huff. For an episode about an idyllic society, that's been happening an awful lot. Rygel and D'Argo have landed on the surface, although not smoothly, according to D'Argo's exposition that they lost power and Rygel's accompanying bitchery. Rygel's in his Thronesled, which I love and also covet, and D'Argo communicates their status to Pilot. However, the comm quickly loses power, followed closely by D'Argo's Qualta blade and, most amusingly, Rygel's Thronesled, which sends him tumbling to the ground in an amusingly twitchy heap. D'Argo stalks off, and Rygel tries his best to follow. Aw. Of course, Rygel being part of the away team is so contrived it defies belief, for a number of reasons, but someone must have been slipping me some Kool-Aid, because it doesn't really bother me.

On *Moya*, Zhaan and Aeryn are arguing over the best course of action. They exposit that D'Argo found Crichton's module, but Aeryn wants to gather more data so as to avoid whatever happened to D'Argo and Rygel, while Zhaan wants to investigate immediately in case the landing party is hurt. I'm sure Crichton will be just thrilled to know how quickly you were willing to speed off to rescue D'Argo and Rygel, sister. After Aeryn deduces the power drain by the absence of any energy signature from the landing module, they rather incongruously have an argument about [Zhaan not being a priest anymore](#), something that Crichton just as oddly brought up in an earlier scene. Zhaan cautions Aeryn that she doesn't want to get into this area of discussion, and honey, we all saw (well, Aeryn didn't see it, but I'd wager she's heard about it by now) you [kill your lover with your bare hands](#), so to speak, among [other scary things in which you've been involved](#). We know you're mad, bad, and dangerous to know -- do we have to belabor the point? Anyway, the girls agree that they should attempt to discover what's behind the power drain.

-- Page 5 --

Crichton is on his way back to his "home" when he's waylaid by Rokon and three other hunters. Crichton's attempts to assure Rokon that he has nothing to worry about

fail, and he's about to die a nasty death when D'Argo shows up in a fury. Nothing like kicking the shit out of some misguided locals to assuage those old pangs of guilt. One of the hunters takes one look at D'Argo and goes running faster than Paramount ran away from Tom Cruise, and if that's indicative of the level of bravery among their ranks, it's not really any wonder that Kato-Re's hoping his daughter will opt for the alien stallion. The other three are driven off readily enough, with Rokon sustaining a nasty slash from D'Argo's blade, and then D'Argo kneels next to a petulant Crichton and tells him, "You smell like dren. You look like dren." D'Argo, I know [your sense of smell is overdeveloped](#), but I'm starting to think you might want to visit the ophthalmologist soon. Then again, that beard is pretty fugly. Crichton tells D'Argo to get away from him and stomps off, and I'd be surprised at seeing someone react this way to having his life saved if I hadn't watched this show before.

Back in the village, we get a pointless shot of people doing agrarian-society things, and then Lisala is cauterizing Rokon's wound as he tells her, her father, and his mother his account of what happened, describing a "man-creature with tentacles and tattoos all over his head." Yeah, I saw that guy on the ferry back from the Fire Island Pines last week. His name's Fred. The mother, "Neera," takes the opportunity to liken Crichton to a parasite, and there are a number of gross jokes I could make, but I'll move on to where Kato-Re tells Neera that their ancestors were space travelers as well, and Neera responds by basically calling Kato-Re his daughter's pimp. After a little male pearl-clutching, Lisala cuts in, "She knows nothing of my heart and less of my sleeping habits. She should only get some of her own." Listening to your line deliveries will certainly be a step in the right direction. The Cabinet meeting ends with Neera bitchily telling Kato-Re not to show weakness.

Rygel is snoring away when Crichton and D'Argo return, and Crichton snittily wakes him up and tells him he has to leave. Rygel: "This isn't the happy reunion I'd planned on." He actually sounds more hurt than sarcastic there. I'm a little concerned. Anyway, Crichton's issue is that he believes *Moya* and crew abandoned him, which isn't all that logical, because why the hell would they be there now, but D'Argo sets him straight about what happened. Crichton is absolutely stunned when he realizes that they spent three months searching for him, given everything they have at stake. It's a beautiful moment, really. "You came back... to look for me." Rygel: "A lapse of some judgment I'll regret for the rest of my life." Ah, that's better. D'Argo brings up the "negative power vortex," which Rygel hasn't figured out yet despite having been unceremoniously dumped out of his Thronesled earlier, so he has to go on a whiny rant about all the things they'll be missing. He concludes with, "Sounds like paradise." Hey, he said it, not me. This time.

-- Page 6 --

On *Moya*, Aeryn comes across Zhaan, who's chanting in her native tongue, seemingly in a trance. Aeryn tells her to wake up, and Zhaan opens her eyes and, irritatingly cheerily, says she wasn't asleep, but merely increasing her work efficiency with some sort of Delvian chant. I'd chew Zhaan out for being so Smurfy, but I suppose if anyone has a built-in excuse, it's her. I admit I'd still find it hard to suppress an eye-roll, but even though it's difficult in practice, I think we'd all agree that the best way to deal with such Smurfiness is not to acknowledge it. And that's exactly what Aeryn does, and God love her for it. Aeryn shows Zhaan a map that Pilot just produced, or a

"topographic bioprint," as Zhaan calls it. Zhaan says it's a good start, but it's still too generalized, so they need to isolate the most highly developed organisms. Aeryn notes that that rules out the three they're looking for, which is brilliant, but it's Zhaan's offhand sigh of "Yes" that perfectly rounds off the snark. Hee. Aeryn advances the idea that they need to shield a power source, build it into a projectile, and send it to the planet. She charges Zhaan with finding the right spot: "You locate the target, and I'll hit it." These two work well enough together, it certainly seems to me. Of course, they'll probably work even better together once Aeryn realizes that all she needs to keep Zhaan in a good mood is to carry a powerful lamp around with her.

On the planet, Crichton is in the middle of relating what happened to him. D'Argo notes that Crichton thought he would be there the rest of his life, and Crichton says he still does. That's not putting a whole lot of faith in the remaining crew of *Moya*, but I suppose after Aeryn's bitchy comment, the karma needed some evening up. Crichton goes on that maybe it wouldn't be so bad to be stuck on that planet, and somewhat belaboredly lists everything that's happened to him since the show started. He gets to, "I've had alien creatures in my face, up my nose, inside my brain, down my pants..." It took a while, but he's finally got my full attention. D'Argo looks turned on by the "down my pants" part, not that I blame him or am at all surprised, and Crichton says this is the first place he's found peace...

... which makes the ensuing cut to Rygel both subtle and hilarious. He's snoring away as Lisala approaches. Crichton and D'Argo pop up to greet her, and D'Argo tells her not to be afraid. Lisala is still wary, and asks why he attacked Rokon. D'Argo bites out that he was saving Crichton's life, and after Crichton gives him a "Thanks, big boy, but I'll take it from here" look, he stomps off. Lisala short-bussily asks why Rokon would want to hurt him, and upon hearing the answer, she kisses Crichton. The kiss is unreciprocated, but you have to take into account that D'Argo's still in sight. Lisala offers to take them to her father so Crichton can convince him that D'Argo isn't a threat...

-- Page 7 --

... and then they're walking through the woods, where unbeknownst to them, Rokon and several of the hunters are surrounding them. They quickly use nets to capture D'Argo and Crichton, and Lisala pleads with Rokon to let them go, to no avail...

... and then they're back at the shore, where Lisala's entreaties are enough to wake Rygel. Seeing two of the hunters approaching his spot in Crichton's shelter, he wraps himself up in some sort of small sleeping-bag-looking thing. The hunters grab Crichton's stuff, including Rygel, and head back to join the rest of the party.

So it appears that the hunters acted with Kato-Re's knowledge and permission, as a tribunal is taking place at the village. Kato-Re charges Crichton and D'Argo with assault against his personal guard. Neera rails against Crichton and the "creature," causing D'Argo to give Crichton a "FUCKING humanoids" side-eye that's far more amusing than it has any right to be. Kato-Re says that assault against his guard is punishable by death, but taking into account that he believes them not to be "entirely" at fault, he commutes the sentence to ten cycles in some sort of labor camp. Neera bitches him out, he stands firm, but before we can really get into the power struggle, Rygel twitches and moans from within the bag. Kato-Re has a minion open it up, revealing Rygel's confused and fearful head. People start pointing in adulation, and it



seems very true to Rygel's character that he clearly enjoys the attention despite having no idea what's going on and also being in a bag that, given what we know of his digestive system, probably is no longer the cleanest it's ever been. Crichton snarks, "So glad you could join us, Your Eminence." You'll be delivering the same line a little differently in about thirty seconds, Your Eminently Hot. All the locals get down on their knees and start chanting and prostrating themselves in Rygel's direction, and Crichton looks at the rocks that Will Now Be Important and sees that, from a certain angle, they look an awful lot like a Hynerian. That's rather quick on the uptake for Crichton, but maybe ginkgo biloba figures heavily in this planet's ecosystem. As even Neera reluctantly gets to her knees, Crichton voices the opinion that the people think Rygel's a god. Rygel: "No. Not a god, but... a *sovereign*." Hee. And props to Rygel's puppeteer, because his royal wave is pretty awesome.

So everything's hunky-dory now that the Dominar is in charge, as the *Moya* crew has taken over Kato-Re's royal hut or whatever. Rygel, offhandedly yet imperiously, explains that his empire consisted of tens of thousands of planets, and this must be one of them. D'Argo thinks that doesn't add up, as they're in the Uncharted Territories, and Crichton agrees. Some women come in to bathe Rygel, at which he's all too nauseatingly thrilled, and Crichton rides an eye-roll straight on out of there. Despite the fact that keeping Rygel clean is one of the most beneficial things I can think of for this society, I can't say I blame him.

-- Page 8 --

*Moya*. Zhaan checks in with Aeryn, who says the projectile is almost complete, but the shielded power source is another matter -- she doesn't know enough of the necessary science to build it. "I can't believe this, but I need Crichton." I can not only believe it, I can also sanction it and empathize with it. Zhaan hands over a new map with good news -- it shows three distinct life forms that are different from the others. She then suggests that they use the projectile to point them in the right direction. They're both touchingly thrilled that their shipmates are alive, although Aeryn hides it a bit more than Zhaan. In other startling news, Crichton is good-looking, and Rygel farts a lot. Sometime later, two local women are cooing and fawning over a thankfully-re-robed Rygel, when D'Argo arrives and cuts in with a rumbling "*Excuse me, your Eminence.*" Hee. I could listen to Anthony Simcoe's voice all the livelong day. Once the girls are gone, Rygel bids D'Argo to enter, and D'Argo informs Rygel that the locals are preparing a celebration in his honor, which will mark the point at which he fulfills some prophecy. Rygel's all, who in the what now, but D'Argo can't tell him any more other than that the locals do indeed regard him as a savior rather than a ruler. Neera enters, and Rygel, seemingly on a semi-bluff, asks her for "the sacred text," which Neera helpfully identifies as "the Timbala." If Neera weren't already a skeptic, I'd think Rygel's overeager attitude of "Timbala! That's exactly what I meant! Yes! Timbala! WOOOO!" would be enough for her to look at him askance. She produces the book, and expositis that since it's written in "the ancient language," there are very few who can read it -- only priestains like her, "and, of course, you." She says she looks forward to officiating at the ceremony, and bails in a cloud of smiling disdain. D'Argo asks how Rygel knew about the text. Rygel, looking at the book: "Where were you brought up? Every religion's got one." He really is awesome this episode. He goes on that it's in ancient Hynerian, in which he was tutored as a child. D'Argo rightly notes

that that doesn't mean he can read it now, but Rygel says he'll try. If you fail, don't worry about it, Rygel -- primitive cultures have never been known to take their faiths too seriously.

Crichton brings his stuff back to his lean-to and sees Lisala sitting on his ship. She's upset because she thinks he's immortal, just like she mistakenly thinks Rygel is, and now they can't have a future together. She goes on that at the ceremony, Rygel is supposed to "rise up and lead us to the light." That doesn't sound all that likely, but we do know [he can fart helium](#), so at least he's got a fighting chance. Lisala complains that Rygel is going to take them off the planet whether they want to go or not, and if that's her attitude, you'd think she'd be a little more receptive to Crichton's ensuing attempt to set her straight. But no: "If he is the real Masata, he will rise up and lead us to the light. If he does not prove himself the true Masata tonight, he will suffer a torturous death beyond any other. And so will you!" She stomps off. I guess it's too late to offer to make dinner, Crichton.

-- Page 9 --

Back in town, some pre-prophecy celebrations are depicted, happily for my fingers but not so much from the standpoint of drama, for far too long. D'Argo kneels down and asks if Rygel has anything they can use, and Rygel explains that the original settlers of the planet (the "Aquarans," or some such) were colonists sent out from the Hynerian Empire during the reign of Rygel the Tenth as part of a program to expand the reach of the monarchy, but they were abandoned. D'Argo refrains from commenting that he was more interested in anything they can use to their *benefit*. And the bad news keeps on coming, as Rygel tells him that the power drain is intentional -- there's a device in place causing it in an effort to make sure the settlers can never develop the ability to reach out to any other worlds. "They can't be anything other than the blind followers of the family of Rygel." Call the device nefarious if you must, but you have to admit that achieving the goal of blind loyalty to a Hynerian was likely to require great lengths. I do like the parallel between Crichton's "abandonment" and that of the Aquarans, though. Rygel goes on that the priestains made up the whole Masata thing, elevating his status up to god in order to make their position more important. D'Argo points out the obvious, that the Aquarans are preparing not for the return of their king, but of their savior. Rygel: "Then we are felled." I wonder if they can get away with saying words like "frell" and "dren" on television in this part of the galaxy, or if they have to make up words to substitute for them, like "fuck" and "shit." But that would be kind of silly, wouldn't it?

The pre-show is still going on, and on, and on. Crichton returns to town and awkwardly and unnecessarily makes his way through the dancers, and then enters the royal hut or whatever. He tells them the news that they're screwed, which D'Argo already knows, but which Rygel for some reason now is trying to spin, saying that the whole "rising up into the light" thing is only a metaphor. Crichton is all, "NOT," and says that the people are out burning their possessions because they expect Rygel to part the heavens. Rygel moans that he can't do that, and unfortunately Neera is at the door and hears this, and shoots away with a satisfied smirk, ignoring Rygel's command for her to come back. He certainly picked a bad time to lose his delusions of grandeur.

*Moya*. Zhaan enters the bridge with the latest map, which shows that all three of their shipmates are very close to the vortex site. They launch the projectile, which reads as on target until it disappears into the vortex. They resign themselves to waiting. I just hope it doesn't take their shipmates three months to return, as that's when Zhaan starts to lose her patience.

-- Page 10 --

On the surface, Neera, Lisala, and Kato-Re are having a little confab that can't bode well. Rygel emerges and makes a speech about being a united people and him rising up and leading them to the light. It's intended to be motivational, but the fact that the only response is a tepid birdcall probably indicates failure on that front. Nonetheless, Rygel presses on, but Neera loses patience and confronts him, and very soon the crowd is chanting, "False god!" It's not the prettiest scene, but I'd be willing to bet Rygel's been called worse. Rygel says he's not a god, which is the cue for the crowd to rush him. Crichton tries to protect Rygel, but D'Argo pulls him away, and the two of them escape...

... to the shore. Crichton's upset, but D'Argo rightly points out that they'll have a better chance of helping Rygel this way. Just then, the projectile lands in the water not ten feet from them, and if Aeryn's aim is that good from space, you can just add that to the very long list of reasons not to piss her off. Crichton retrieves the case and opens it to find the map that shows the vortex area.

Rygel's being marched through the town, hands tied, as he loudly tries to apologize for the wrongs of his empire and to explain his situation. I know they might still think he's a god, but given that it's Rygel, if they were going to tie him up I can't believe they didn't go the extra mile and gag him as well. Rygel's eyes widen in horror as he realizes that they're going to roast him, and not in the fun way, but then Crichton and D'Argo march back into the village and get everyone's attention. Crichton informs them of the device, and explains how it works while D'Argo repels an attack from Rokon. Crichton goes on that when their ancestors arrived at the planet, their ships functioned, and they left behind machines that functioned as well, until the device was activated. Crichton points the *J'accuse!* finger at Neera, saying the priestains have been lying to them for generations, an accusation that Rygel backs up. Neera exhorts Rokon to kill Crichton, and I don't know if it's past Kato-Re's nap time or what, but you'd think as the leader he might express his opinion here. Also, I'm surprised Neera isn't twirling a handlebar at this point, but maybe they thought a female actually sporting facial hair would bring some originality to this storyline, which I'm sensing is strictly off-limits. Neera = cliche = zzzzz. Anyway, Rokon does eventually attack Crichton, but when Crichton is down on the ground, he notices that the Hynerian-shaped rock has two carvings that look a lot like Muppet hands. So he runs and grabs Rygel (calling him "Sparky" in the process, which never fails to crack me up), carries him to the rock, and has him stick his hands in the holes. The rock splits open and sends a jet of blue light into the sky, and Rygel's Thronesled comes to life (presumably signaling the deactivation of the power-draining device) and flies over to him, and he sits down and rises up. It's preposterous but also hilarious, much like a lot of this episode, so I can live with it. The locals start chanting their Masata chant again, but Rygel tells them he's not a god -- just a sovereign. Neera, for her part, looks like she just swallowed a bee, and that's probably a best-case scenario for her if the

Aquaran laws we've been exposed to so far are any indication. Crichton snarks to D'Argo, "The slug who would be king," as said slug goes back to doing the royal wave. Heh.

-- Page 11 --

Sometime later, we see that the locals' machinery is working, and then Kato-Re says he wishes Rygel could stay there with them. I knew this guy wasn't the sharpest knife in the drawer, but this is taking things to a whole new level. Kato-Re then gives Rygel a gift of food, causing Rygel to make a series of hilarious faces of joy.

Elsewhere, Crichton is saying his goodbyes to Rokon and Lisala. Rokon expositis that his mother will "survive her displacement." That's more than I expected, frankly.

Crichton tells Rokon to take care of Lisala, and normally I hate it when guys use that expression that makes the woman sound helpless, but Lisala bugs the shit out of me, especially given that, in front of her boyfriend, she subsequently invites Crichton to "stay and help [them] rebuild." So that's what the Aquarans are calling it these days. Crichton says he has to go, and D'Argo pipes up to give some more urgency to that idea, so Crichton leaves Rokon and Lisala. Lisala stares longingly after him, but given that he's wearing a sleeveless shirt, I can't imagine she can help herself. D'Argo asks Crichton, "Was it worth the trouble?" Crichton looks around, and asks, "What trouble?" This sounds like a man who didn't just write ten pages. D'Argo and Crichton head off, and we're done.

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<http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/show/farscape/durka-returns/>

## - The Enemy Of My Enemy Is...

-- Page 1 --

*Moya's* in starburst, and it's a rough ride. Crichton asks what's up with that, and Pilot tells him that it's an unfortunate but unavoidable consequence of *Moya* being weakened from her pregnancy. Zhaan pipes up that her sensors are compromised as well, and that basically none of her systems are running anywhere close to peak efficiency. Pilot testily snits that he's compensating for the sensors, but *Moya's* child has first call on her resources. Too bad she doesn't know what a load of trouble her kid's going to turn out to be right from the start. Most parents at least get two years. Zhaan snits to Crichton that she now understands why the Peacekeepers tried to prevent the pregnancy, and she's certainly selective enough about when she turns on the Delvian empathy, if the way [she murdered her lover](#) wasn't enough of an indication. They come out of starburst, but their relief is extremely short-lived, as they immediately see a small ship on a collision course with them. After a cute shot of Rygel getting pitched about in his pajamas, Pilot unsuccessfully tries to evade it, and it hits *Moya* at a rather hard clip. Pilot reports that *Moya* is undamaged, but the other ship has lost "propulsor control," so he's deploying the docking web. Zhaan and Crichton both think that perhaps that's not the wisest idea, but Pilot feels that the collision was his and *Moya's* fault, so he brooks no dissent. Crichton runs off to "rally the troops"...

...and, presumably some short time later, a long- and white-haired figure enters from the hangar. Apparently the use of "troops" to describe the welcome wagon was completely apropos, as Aeryn and D'Argo both have their large weapons leveled

straight at the guy. The guy...tells...the crew...that...he...is...un...armed. Sorry, it's just that the guy speaks really, really slowly. And I guess I shouldn't make fun, just in case he's had some brain trauma that's causing him to talk this way, but really, what are the chances of that? Anyway, Zhaan rushes up and says that the dude's ship is armed with a powerful energy weapon, but he counters -- slowly -- that it's powered down as a sign of their peaceful intentions. He asks if it's okay if his two shipmates join him, and when Aeryn assents, he calls them. However, Rygel has just appeared on the scene, and when he hears the guy's voice, he looks up with an expression so fearful you'd think [all of his wives](#) had come to give him a piece of their minds *en masse*. We flash back to Rygel's memories of [Durka](#), and realize that, underneath the eye patch and long hair, that's who's standing before us now. Rygel hisses that he can't be alive, as we flash back to the vision of "Durka's" ("SPOILER!") corpse, and then Rygel Thronesleds forward and hocks a huge loogie right in Durka's face. Well, at least the eye patch is being put to good use. Despite the fact that they're still leveling their enormous boom sticks at Durka, his shipmates think that Rygel is being rude, so he tries to convince them of Durka's identity, but Aeryn dismissively says that Durka died over a hundred cycles earlier. However, Durka owns up to who he is, prompting the opening credits to roll. He's going to have a lot to answer for once they're done, but at least now he's got a few moments to wipe the slime off his face.

-- Page 2 --

But apparently, he moves as slowly as he speaks, as the goo from Rygel's mouth is still oozing down his face when we return. Rygel, however, can move surprisingly quickly when he wants to, as he launches himself at Durka and tries to sink his teeth into Durka's neck. Crichton's too quick for Rygel, though, and drags him back. Aeryn asks how it's possible that he's Durka, as even if he'd escaped the *Zelbinion*, he would have died of old age over fifty cycles earlier. This is the cue for a vaguely unsettling voice to cut in that Durka was "saved." Not from split ends, he wasn't. A middle-aged blue-skinned (or so it seems on the screen, anyway) male slides into the frame and introduces himself as "Salis," of the Nebari, and over Rygel's struggles and protests calmly asserts that Durka poses no danger. The *Moya* crew is still skeptical, but Salis says that the Nebari spent over a hundred cycles making sure Durka would be "incapable of evil," and if his lilting, deceptively authoritative manner of speaking wasn't already giving you the creepy-crawlies, the possibilities accompanying that statement sure should. I love this storyline, though -- it's been done to death in other science fiction, yes, but the moral ambiguity, eye-of-the-beholder stuff is almost always a winner, and it's even more so given how it relates to many of the *Moya* crew. Rygel, needless to say, is unconvinced by Salis's words, but Crichton eventually puts him down, and he Thronesleds away. Salis says that Rygel will soon understand that he's wrong. Brrrr. Crichton says it may take some doing. "Being tortured has that effect." Crichton will be even better able to attest to that soon, if a certain villain with a similarly deceptively creepy manner of speaking has anything to say about it. Salis counters that Crichton should know, as a Sebacean, but Crichton corrects him that he's human. Aeryn, for her part, doesn't pipe up that *she's* a Sebacean, and she really must sense how oddly tense the situation is if she's willing for one second to have Salis believe that she's from that backwater planet "[Erp](#)." Meanwhile, Salis replies, "Human. I'm not familiar with your species," in a voice that suggests he'd love to have

Crichton pinned to an index card. Which is one of the few ways I wouldn't want to see him. Salis informs them that they're scheduled to rendezvous with another of their ships, but in the meantime, they'll "require" quarters and food. Durka asks if the ship has any containment facilities, which seems like an odd question at first, but I guess there's no way he would have known that *Moya* was once commandeered by the Peacekeepers. Anyway, the point is that they're transporting "a very dangerous criminal"...

-- Page 3 --

...and next we see said criminal being marched along with her hands cuffed behind her back. And I could drag out the suspense a bit more, but I have a strong feeling this recap's going to be long enough as it is, and an even stronger feeling that there's no one reading this who doesn't know that the prisoner is Chiana. She's wearing an electronic collar, and if it weren't for the lights blinking on it, anyone who's remotely familiar with her personality could be forgiven for thinking she's just accessorizing. Durka marches Chiana past D'Argo and then Crichton, the latter of whom she gives a look that's both pleading and lustful. Which is a good introduction, because Chiana always has some game going on beneath the surface. (I'll get this out of the way now -- I love her. I expected to hate her -- the idea of the sexpot alien just seems so tired -- but I love how simultaneously ruthless, selfish, loyal, and just plain fucked up she is, and I also love the introduction of a character who is *not* trying to get home. She adds a dimension that makes the show more interesting, in my opinion. Hey, didn't I just complain that the recap was going to be long?) Durka puts Chiana in one of the cells, and the observers gather at the door as it closes and Chiana sinks to her knees. Crichton asks what Chiana's crime is, but Durka tells him that it's none of his concern, and asks about their quarters. D'Argo says they're ready, and normally it wouldn't be a tough guess to figure out which of Aeryn and Zhaan got stuck with doing the turndown service. However, given Aeryn's upcoming "Durka, EEEEE!" attitude, the answer might not be as obvious as it seems.

Anyway, Durka says he'll oversee the repairs to his ship, and as they walk off, D'Argo tells him that the DRDs have completed their damage assessment. I wonder if the DRDs jack up their prices like most mechanics do. I can only imagine they could make up a lot of repairs that a spaceship would need, particularly on this show where shit -- er, "dren" gets made up quite a bit. Once they're gone, Salis pointedly asks Crichton if he's ever been stung by [*some sort of plant that I wouldn't even dare try to spell*]. Crichton: "Not yet." Hee. Salis warns that those plants also present an "intriguing exterior." Chiana chooses that moment to sidle forward and beg Crichton to help her. "They won't tell you what I've done because they're embarrassed. You wouldn't consider it a crime." Well, she sized him up pretty quickly. Salis warns Chiana that she should really be shutting up now, but she pleads for amnesty. Crichton slowly and uncomfortably tells her they're not a diplomatic ship, and I need to take a break, because the thought of this crew being some sort of government representatives is enough to make me laugh until I cry, and vice versa. Chiana asks then that he use moral authority, another giggle-worthy irony, and goes on that what they're going to do to her is cruel by anyone's definition. Salis chooses that moment to give credence to her point by pressing two implants in his temple, which activates the collar, causing Chiana intense pain that makes her writhe on the floor in the unfun way. After a few



seconds, Crichton pulls Salis's hand away and asks what the hell he's doing. Salis calmly says that her behavior was inappropriate, and if he shocks Chiana every time such behavior surfaces, I'm surprised she hasn't turned into Ellen Burstyn at the end of *Requiem For A Dream* by now. Crichton says he doesn't care what she did, causing Salis to add another layer of menace to his voice as he points out that Crichton's crew crippled his ship and disrupted their plans. "Are you now the arbiter of our justice system as well?" Crichton warily considers this.

-- Page 4 --

Cut to Zhaan disbelievingly asking Salis, "The Nebari practice mind control?" I don't know what her equivalent of a ton is, but I think it's safe to say that if you measure it in bricks, that's what this revelation is going to go over like. Salis explains that they eliminated the thought patterns that caused Durka to behave "inappropriately" by a process of neural realignment so intricate that each subject must be placed in cryogenic stasis for nearly a hundred cycles. You're welcome to hash this out in the forums, but discussing the ethics of this procedure could take a hundred cycles on its own, so I'll limit myself to saying that it sounds fairly inefficient. D'Argo is there as well, and he asks if it's still the real Durka, by which I expect he's asking if the guy still has all of Durka's memories, and is told the answer is yes. Zhaan emotionally asks what each subject feels during the treatment, which is an odd question considering she was just told it's done with the subject in stasis, but Salis gets at her meaning and tells her that Durka appreciates what they did for him. "Ask him if you don't believe me." Well, maybe he appreciates it, and maybe he thinks toeing the party line is preferable to spending another hundred years on ice. Not that the two are mutually exclusive. Zhaan sniffs that she might just ask Durka at that, and leaves. Salis volunteers that if it had been possible, they would have saved everyone on board the *Zelbinion*, but "they refused to surrender." D'Argo disbelievingly asks how many warships it took to defeat the Peacekeeper command carrier, but Salis explains his people have no warships. "One of our standard host vessels engaged the *Zelbinion*." He lets D'Argo process that for a moment, and then adds, "Much like the one coming for us." D'Argo, I'd suggest you keep your thought patterns in line.

In his quarters, Rygel brandishes a small knife for a moment, and then Aeryn walks in and pointedly asks what he's up to. Rygel: "Nothing. I'm just sitting here reflecting on my fond memories of Durka and the *Zelbinion*." Heh. Aeryn firmly instructs him to leave the visitors alone, and not to go off on "some childish vendetta." Even given that it's Rygel who's concerned, that seems like an awfully skewed way of looking at the situation, but Aeryn goes on that she was taught a great deal about "Captain Durka's distinguished career." Looks like mind control doesn't always require the time and effort that the Nebari put into it. Rygel as much as says this, and asks what she thought when they found the *Zelbinion* and learned that Durka had taken his own life, implying that such cowardice is unbecoming to a Peacekeeper, particularly one regarded as so legendary. Aeryn, in turn, points out that that's irrelevant, as the fact that Durka's alive means that Rygel was obviously mistaken, but Rygel says that Durka chose to end his "distinguished career" by faking his own death to save himself while his crew died. Aeryn says Rygel doesn't know what happened, and smoothly plucks the knife from where Rygel hid it in his tunic or robes or whatever. She'll need it

to slice her way out through the issues that have suddenly filled up the room. Which she does...

-- Page 5 --

...and then she's telling Durka, who's in the middle of his repairs, that she studied all his achievements at Peacekeeper training, and recounts a couple of them with that "Durka, EEEEE!" voice and expression to which I alluded earlier. At least her smile muscles finally have something to do. But not for very long, as Durka informs her that Rygel's speculation about how he survived was correct, and if they ever make a gag version of this episode, this will be the chance for the Foley guys to match up their loudest glass breaking with the expression on Aeryn's face as she asks, "You deserted your ship?" Durka replies that he's done far worse in his time. Like breaking poor Aeryn's heart, here.

Crichton taps on Chiana's cell door with a tray of food cubes. She's grateful, and as she takes a few bites made a lot more awkward by that fact that her hands are still shackled, she explains that she doesn't respect authority, and she left the "half-dead sanctimoniousness of her planet the first chance [she] got." In addition, she stole food when she was hungry and defended herself when necessary. Chiana's starting to sound like the Jean Valjean of her world here, and I have to admit that this isn't the first thing that's made me think that *Farscape* was ripe for a musical episode. Crichton asks if she ever killed anyone, to which she answers negatively, and says that she's regarded as so dangerous because on her planet, "you conform," and you don't do the things she did. Crichton has the good grace not to lick his lips here. Chiana emotionally adds that now she'll be undergoing the same treatment as Durka -- "mental cleansing into an obedient zombie." Crichton is surprised that they'll inflict that punishment on their own kind, but Chiana echoes what Salis told Zhaan and D'Argo when she says they think they're doing their victims a favor. She starts to freak out, banging her body against the door as she says she'd rather die than undergo the treatment. Crichton rushes in and holds Chiana, and she begs him not to let them take her. After a moment, he asks if she's all right, and she smiles. That doesn't seem incongruous, given that she's in Crichton's arms, but she does look a bit shiftier than perhaps is necessary.

Crichton is asking Durka whether the mental cleansing is like brainwashing. I do have to point out that perhaps asking the guy whose thought patterns were custom made to the Nebari's liking isn't likely to be the most objective witness in the galaxy, but I guess Crichton's options on the interviewing front are severely limited. Durka says it's more like a correction -- somewhat like the difference between a knife attack and life-saving surgery. And speaking of saving lives, Crichton saves his own and Durka's by noticing the explosive charge that's rolled into the room and tackling Durka, thereby throwing himself out of the way as well. Pilot informs Zhaan of the explosion, and she in turn frantically calls for help. Aeryn instructs her to stay put, and asks for D'Argo to meet her in the maintenance bay...

-- Page 6 --

...into which we see Rygel Thronesled to survey the scene. Durka isn't moving, but Crichton is clearly alive, if dazed. To Rygel's small (heh) credit, he looks chagrined that Crichton was present for the explosion, but his countenance changes to imply that he's willing to live with the collateral damage. Pretty expressive for a puppet. He

moves in close to Durka, but, unfortunately for him, Durka's not only alive but hella pissed, as he grabs Rygel by the throat with a savage expression on his face. Unlucky for Rygel that Durka finally decided to do something at normal rather than vaguely "special" speed.

After the break, Rygel's still getting the stuffing choked out of him, but then Durka releases his grip and seems to lose consciousness. However, Crichton takes up where Durka left off, going him one better by grabbing Rygel out of his Thronesled and throwing him to the floor. D'Argo and Aeryn arrive as Crichton threatens to throw Rygel off the ship. Rygel tries to convince Crichton that he saw the evil in Durka's face, but Durka unsteadily gets to his feet and says that since his presence is so painful for Rygel, he'll confine himself to areas outside Rygel's sight. D'Argo: "No. We'll lock Rygel up first." Aw, come on, D'Argo. What did Chiana ever do to you? As DRDs scurry this way and that, D'Argo amusingly has Rygel tucked under his arm as Rygel berates him, saying he's trying to save them from "that maniac." D'Argo, practically enough, informs Rygel that a ship of the class that destroyed the *Zelbinion* is on its way, and as such, perhaps doing things likely to antagonize the Nebari isn't the hottest idea at the moment. Chiana hears this conversation, and then Salis appears and informs her of the explosion. He checks her cuffs, as his first thought was that she was behind it, but they're secure. He still has to singsong (brrrr) that he can't believe a word she says, and then adds that she should remain calm, as they'll be home soon. If her remaining calm is that important, telling her she'll be home soon seems somewhat counterproductive. Chiana tries to soften Salis up, and we learn two things. One is that Nebari of Chiana's age are expected to fit in and not have thoughts of traveling or doing fun things. The other is that Salis responds to sexual overtures with electric shocks, so female Nebari should take that under advisement for the ten minutes that Salis has to live (SPOILER!). Of course, Chiana did ask Salis if he wanted to run his hands around "again," so perhaps the appropriateness of his behavior hasn't always been completely beyond reproach, not that that's likely to come as a huge surprise.

-- Page 7 --

Sometime later, D'Argo is opening a large case which contains several explosive ingredients. He tells Crichton, "Fortunately, the ignorant Hynerian got all the proportions wrong." As if Rygel weren't sensitive enough about his proportions. He goes on that if Rygel had gotten the explosives right, Crichton would be in a million of the prettiest little pieces you've ever seen. Yes, I'm paraphrasing a little bit. Pilot informs Zhaan that the explosion caused no damage to *Moya*. Salis butts in and asks what happens if he tries again, but is told that that won't happen, as he's locked in his quarters and under restraint. Salis "suggests" that Zhaan turn Rygel over to him when his ship arrives, a request she flatly denies. Salis says that Rygel has serious flaws in his character that must be corrected. When he puts it that way, he's starting to make some sense. Zhaan does agree with him somewhat when she says that "even Rygel, with his many faults, does not deserve that." Salis opines that Zhaan could use an adjustment herself, causing her to step forward with a "just give me an excuse, you slow-talking freak" look on her face. Instead of being cowed, however, Salis notes, "My point exactly," before self-satisfying his way out of there.

Chiana's freed her hands, and is working on the collar with some tool she probably ganked from Crichton when she was all woe-is-me with him earlier. She succeeds in releasing it.

Rygel's asleep in his quarters, hands tied in front of him. His door opens, waking him up, and he loudly complains that he's in no mood for visitors. Chiana appears out of nowhere and shoves a pillow over his mouth. Considering that she hasn't even met Rygel before, you have to admire her instincts. She suggests they deal, as Rygel wants to get untied so he can kill Durka, and she wants to get off *Moya*. Rygel seems terrifiedly amenable, so Chiana makes to take the pillow away. "You scream, I push this cushion down in your colon." The cushion seriously is hoping that Rygel doesn't scream. When Chiana's released him and he's caught his breath, he asks her to untie him, saying that he can tell her how to get to the transport hangar and what codes will open the door. Chiana finds that insufficient, as she's quite the expert on cracking codes, so Rygel offers to create a diversion to facilitate her escape. Chiana agrees to that plan, and as she starts to untie Rygel's hands, she apologizes for calling him a toad. Rygel says he makes allowances for stress on the ship. Chiana chuckles: "This isn't stress, old man. Stress is if you don't come through for me." Rygel looks like he's having Chiana-related performance anxiety, and if that's Chiana's typical motivational speech, I highly doubt he's anywhere near the first. However, despite Chiana's menace, as soon as Rygel's hands are free he hits his comm and yells that Chiana's escaped and is in his quarters. This is the only part of the episode that rings false for me, as (a) at least from my point of view, Chiana's deal looked both reasonable and attractive as far as Rygel was concerned, and, far more importantly, (b) Rygel had no idea that Chiana wouldn't kill him for his betrayal. That would have been just as quick as what she ended up doing to him, no?

-- Page 8 --

Aeryn yells that Rygel better not be lying, and Crichton runs off as D'Argo says he'll keep watch over the Nebari ship. Durka informs Salis that Chiana has escaped, and he's all, "Find her." I can see why he's in charge.

Crichton and Aeryn reach Rygel's quarters and hear muffled Rygel-like sounds. They find Rygel in some cubbyhole with a bag over his head, and when they take it off, he tells them that Chiana's headed to try to steal a transport. Crichton informs Zhaan, who's up in Command, of the situation, and she orders Pilot to get the DRDs searching. Aeryn and Crichton leave Rygel, whose hands are re-tied, where he is, much to his chagrin.

Aeryn checks Chiana's cell, but all that's left is her cloak and the collar. Salis tries to activate the collar with his implants, but obviously fails. The Xylophone Of Maybe I Shouldn't Have Been So Trigger-Happy plays. We get shots of the DRDs, Zhaan, Crichton, Durka, and Salis all in different parts of the ship. I'd be tempted to make a *Clue*-esque guess about the upcoming murder if I hadn't seen the episode already. Aeryn's taken pity on Rygel and is attempting to free his hands when Durka startles her. He tells her he can't find Chiana, and asks if anyone's guarding Command. Aeryn warily asks if she's capable of taking over the ship, and is told she's capable of just about anything.

Pilot urgently tells Crichton that there's movement on his tier, and if Crichton weren't the star of the show, I'd be really afraid of him undergoing the fate of the Tom Skerritt

character in *Alien*. However, when he goes to investigate, he finds Salis lying dead in a pool of blood with one of his collars lying next to him. Oh, Salis -- bleeding all over someone else's ship just seems so...*inappropriate*.

When we return, Zhaan has joined Crichton corpse-side. Crichton notes that the likely murderer is Chiana, and Zhaan says she's not surprised, given what Salis had in store for her. Zhaan's tone is neither condoning nor condemning, and I like her a lot more when she acknowledges moral ambiguity than when she's preaching. Or worse, [chanting](#). Zhaan echoes D'Argo's pragmatism from earlier when she points out that the big question is how the Nebari will react to Salis's death. Crichton gets up off his ass to resume the search.

Aeryn, pulse rifle drawn, warily enters Command with Rygel in tow. Pilot informs her that the DRDs have reported no trace of Chiana. D'Argo bellows that if she sees Chiana, she should shoot to kill, and Aeryn separates her weapon into two, one for each hand, and responds, "If you insist." Hee. Hearing movement behind her, she whirls, but it's Durka, so she holds her fire. She's going to have reason to regret having such finely honed reflexes soon enough. Durka...asks...if...Salis...is...dead. Aeryn says yes, and expresses her sympathy. Durka falls to his knees and begins to snivel, and the eye patch is coming in handy again, as its presence means that crocodile tears dripping from only one eye will be sufficient. Also, Rygel's ears amusingly call bullshit by pricking up at that moment. Aeryn holsters one of her guns and walks up to Durka, who immediately grabs her other gun away, throwing her aside in the process, and then kicks Rygel in the face. I'm not rooting for Durka here or anything, but I have to note that that must have been pretty satisfying. Aeryn does manage to avoid being shot, but the element of surprise has her half a step slow through the ensuing fight, and soon Durka boots her into unconsciousness.

-- Page 9 --

Cut to Durka ripping out some of *Moya's* command cables, the first effect of which is to kill the comm system. As Durka continues to rip and hack with a knife, Pilot screechily asks what he thinks he's doing. Durka responds by firing a no-look shot into the Clamshell Cam. Hee. His comic timing is certainly better when he doesn't have to talk. Pilot frantically tries to get anyone on the comm system, to no avail. Crichton opines into the silence, "Not good."

And that's an accurate assessment, as in Command, we pan across a tableau of Aeryn, lying unconscious on the floor with her hands tied behind her back; Rygel, lying unconscious on a table with his hands tied in front; and, next to him, an array of nasty-looking torture devices. Should he get out of this, I can only imagine that Rygel's first purchase will be *The Anarchist's Cookbook*. Durka moves close to Rygel, brandishing the knife, but then, after a long moment, starts cutting off his own hair. It's a good thing he doesn't have a Fu Manchu, because that would just be a lot more work. Also, I saw that coming, but it was still funny. See my point about Durka's comic timing above.

Sometime later, the haircut is finished and the eye patch has been ditched, so Durka's all ready to wake Rygel up. As Rygel cowers in fear, Durka explains that the explosion undid the Nebari mental cleansing. "Isn't that the most superb irony?" Well, just the fact that it actually *is* irony is a good fucking start. Aeryn comes to, and Durka tells her how great it is to be back to his old self, as when he was cleansed, he actually felt

ashamed of what he'd done. Aeryn says she takes it that Durka killed Salis, which he neither confirms nor denies. What he does do is to menace Rygel with the knife. He only cuts off his comm device, though, and uses it grandly to pronounce to the crew that he's the new commander of *Moya*. Zhaan stops in her tracks when she hears his voice, and amusingly, the DRD alongside her does as well. Durka goes on that he's holding Aeryn and Rygel hostage, and the rest of them should leave the ship immediately. Aeryn activates her comm with her mouth and yells to Crichton that Durka murdered Salis before Durka smacks her in the face with his (possession being at least nine-tenths of the law out here and all) gun. It seems like Aeryn's only logical intention in conveying this information is to spur him to get Chiana to help them rather than mistrusting her. D'Argo and Crichton get frustrated with their inability to communicate, and run off.

-- Page 10 --

Zhaan has managed to make it to Pilot's chamber. He tells her that he's trying to override Durka's control, but Durka keeps anticipating his moves and heading him off. Zhaan has nothing to add, so we move on to...

...Crichton and D'Argo almost literally running into each other. D'Argo growlingly asks if Crichton heard Durka's ultimatum. Crichton: "Yeah. Nebari mental cleansing doesn't get the tough stains out." Hee. Crichton does better when he lays off the Southernisms. D'Argo says it's imperative that they regain command. Upon being asked if he's got a plan, D'Argo dismissively growls, "Have I got a plan." That's a...yes, then.

Seems so, as D'Argo opens the door to some sort of shaft. He tells Crichton that it leads directly to Command, and crawls in as he instructs Crichton to keep looking for Chiana. Crichton suggests he not fall out of the ship again, referring to the soon-to-be-recapped "They've Got A Secret," as I'm sure you're all well aware. Unfortunately, Durka is similarly well aware of D'Argo's approach. He pushes some buttons, the door to the shaft closes, and then two walls drop down in succession, the first of which causes D'Argo to lose his Qualta blade, and the second of which prevents him from reaching it. A little convenient, perhaps, but okay. D'Argo yells for Crichton, when it seems like Chiana would be more of a help in this particular situation.

Durka tells Aeryn that she's witnessing a legend in action. Aeryn spits that he's a disgrace rather than a legend. Durka pointedly asks her why it is that she's not a Peacekeeper any more, and given how obviously that question cuts Aeryn to the core, the knife is his hand kind of seems like overkill. Durka then attempts starburst, but fails of course, due to *Moya's* pregnancy. Durka: "Score one up for the underdogs!" Durka, you're a pretty good villain, but letting you recap won't fit in with the limitations of my schedule. Those limitations being "my lifespan."

Pilot unnecessarily expositis why the starburst failed, and Zhaan nervously speculates that Durka will find out about the pregnancy soon enough.

Over the comm, Durka threatens to kill one of the hostages if starburst isn't reactivated. It's too bad the comm is disabled in the other direction, because I would have loved to see if everyone could have resisted the temptation to ask, "Which one?" Crichton seems to sense someone nearby, and indeed, we finally see Chiana moving about. Crichton moves down a corridor, and the camera goes all three-quarter speed



as the creepy xylophone starts up again. He goes through a door into what looks like a cargo hold, although it's pretty hard to tell one room from another around here. Crichton seems to know Chiana's in there, because he calls to her, saying Durka's "gone Hannibal Lecter on us." Chiana: "I don't know what that means." And now you've officially met John Crichton. She chucklingly asks why he's bothering her, anyway. He says he's just there to talk, which doesn't really answer the question, but is as strange a spot as any to cut out of the scene...

-- Page 11 --

..and to Command, where Durka has decided that he's waited long enough. He menaces Aeryn with some nasty-looking device as he announces to the crew that he's leaving the channel open for motivational purposes. Aeryn bravely, but not entirely convincingly, says torturing her won't help him, but he counters that she should know how good he is at getting results. He gets all class lecturer-y as he asks Rygel if he knows what Sebaceans dislike more than anything else, and Rygel, having seen "[Exodus From Genesis](#)," answers, "Heat." Durka clarifies that he meant *intense* heat, which clues us as to what exactly it is that the nasty-looking device in his hand does. Aeryn's face now betrays her abject fear as we head into another break. Durka's approaching Aeryn with the heater. He's gut-wrenchingly heading straight for the face when Rygel cuts in that he's pathetic. This is unexpected, and given that this is a show that can make you care about Muppets, that's saying a lot. Rygel digs deeper, saying that Durka's all hot (sorry) over the chance to maim and kill a woman who can't even defend herself. "Pathetic." He's not wrong. Durka says that he was going to save Rygel as a bargaining tool, which shows just how right Rygel is, and also perhaps that Durka's brain understandably isn't all it used to be. Durka asks if he thinks his shipmates would care if he burned Rygel's face right off. Rygel calmly says he's welcome to find out, "because the all-powerful Durka is a failure." We see quick shots of everyone on the ship listening as Rygel continues, "You tortured me without mercy, but you never broke me! You only made me stronger, and even if you kill me, I'll be laughing at you, because the last thing I'll think of is you on Nebari Prime for another hundred cycles, being ground back down into nothing!" I guess it makes sense that Rygel would be an expert in making people feel two feet tall. Rygel drops the bomb that *Moya* can't starburst because she's pregnant, and Aeryn invites him to check the nutrient flow and power levels to confirm that Rygel's telling the truth. Rygel intones that there's nothing Durka can do to get starburst back, but Durka demurs. Uh oh.

Chiana jumps down from her hiding place, and she's brandishing a large staff...well, it really looks more like an oar, if you want to know the truth. She instructs Crichton to turn around, which he sort of does, but when Chiana swings at him, he whirls back, grabs her weapon, and throws her to the ground. Crichton gets on top of her, which doesn't seem all that likely to calm her down. She deftly (and also both scarily and awesomely) immediately switches gears, though, apologizing and saying she's not used to trusting anyone. Crichton suggests she start, and they have an unnecessary discussion about the mental cleansing, followed by a too-long speculation from Chiana that she'd be better off teaming up with Durka. When Crichton suggests that Durka can shut off life support everywhere except Command, though, that gets Chiana's attention. She does point out that when the Nebari find out what happened

to Salis, they're going to want to cleanse everyone on *Moya*. Given that, from their point of view, Rygel was the one that set the events leading to Salis's death in motion, that does seem all too likely, and Crichton agrees, moreover suggesting that that makes him and Chiana natural allies. Chiana asks what his plan is, and is frustrated when Crichton's expression seems to suggest he hasn't got one. Not so, though -- "I got a plan. You're just not gonna like it." I don't know, Crichton -- I get the feeling there aren't too many things for which Chiana isn't game. He taps her on the nose and says, "Bait," and Chiana smiles big. See?

-- Page 12 --

And just like that, Durka's roaming the corridors with both of Aeryn's guns when he runs into Chiana. She tells him *Moya's* pregnant, but if they kill the baby, they'll be able to starburst. He tells her to cough up some new information if she values her life, so she tells him that he's headed in the wrong direction, as the ship reconfigured the data to send him into a trap. Durka asks why he should believe her, and she points out that they both want the same thing.

Crichton's waiting around a corner in the cargo hold when the door opens and Durka shoves Chiana inside. She tries to lure him in, but he smells a rat and shoots at Chiana, who tries to dive out of the way but takes it in the arm. I read somewhere that this shot was originally intended to kill Chiana, but when the writers realized they had a great character on their hands, they reconsidered. So I guess Chiana's not only the Jean Valjean of *Farscape* but the Xena as well, which only further strengthens my contention that they really should have done a musical episode at some point. (Don't email me to ask me what the hell I'm talking about, because I have *no idea*.) Anyway, Crichton rushes out and closes the door. Durka heads back the way he came, Crichton tends to Chiana, and they snark at each other about the failure of the plan. Crichton wants to see the wound, but Chiana, in obvious pain, points out that Durka's trying to kill them all, so the priority should be to stop him...

...and we see Crichton heading after Durka with Chiana's oar-like weapon in his hands. Crichton catches up with Durka, who's not in the birthing chamber but the transport hangar. He shoots at Crichton a couple times, and then gets into the Nebari ship and powers it up. Crichton yells that he won't get far without his propulsion system, which is sitting in pieces in the maintenance bay, but Durka declares his intention to fire the ship's weapons into *Moya's* midsection, killing the baby and thereby restoring starburst. I don't really see how giving *Moya* a gaping gut wound is going to immediately restore her back to her full capacity, which I guess must mean that I'm not psychotic. That's surprising. Crichton rushes to open Rygel's case of explosives as he urgently instructs Pilot to regain control in order to open the outer doors. Pilot succeeds in regaining some amount of control as Durka powers up his ship's weapons. Just then, though, Crichton pulls out an explosive and holds it up like he's a contestant on *Bowling For Dollars*. (And if that reference means anything to you, you *can* email me.) Anyway, Crichton rolls the charge into the hangar and yells to Pilot to shut the doors. The charge explodes, and Pilot happily tells us that the outer doors are opening. Durka impotently flails about inside the ship as the vacuum from the doors opening sucks a DRD into the hangar. Those things really need to start a union, because I'm not seeing that they get a whole lot of benefits around here. Pilot succeeds in getting the inside doors to start closing, but by that time Crichton is

already being pulled toward them. He manages to avoid being pulled completely in by holding Chiana's oar horizontally, which has the virtue of being longer than the width of the space between the doors. Zhaan frantically tells Pilot to stop the doors from shutting, and I know she's afraid that Crichton's going to get crushed, but still, remind me never to go on a road trip with her in the back seat. Crichton, using the oar, pulls himself back into the bay, which is completely preposterous, but I appreciate anything that really causes him to use his muscles. Eventually, of course, Crichton pulls himself to safety, and Durka's ship gets sucked out of *Moya*. Over the comm, Durka threatens to hunt Crichton down and kill him, to which Crichton merely laughs and responds, "Get in line." Hee. He adds that Durka should give the Nebari his regards, and we get a very cool shot of Durka yelling Crichton's name as he hurtles off helplessly into the far regions of space. Since he seems so much to get off on irony, he'd probably appreciate it if he ended up on Earth.

-- Page 13 --

Denouement. Rygel asks Aeryn if *Moya* is mad at him for throwing the bomb. Aeryn pointedly says that *Moya* understands, and Rygel tries to answer the obvious implication by pointing out that Crichton threw a bomb too. Aeryn in turn points out that Crichton's bomb caused *Moya* to expel Durka's ship, and I might point out that the difference is sort of like the one between a knife attack and life-saving surgery. Of course, if I did, I'd do so about a hundred times faster than Durka. Aeryn expositos that *Moya* is still in a lot of pain from the damage she took protecting her child, and then returns Rygel's knife by plunging it into the food cubes he's eating. She starts in on a more conciliatory tack, but Rygel snaps, "Don't you dare thank me for saving your life!" Well, I guess that's my cue to shut up. Aeryn says she wasn't going to, and Rygel's all, "Why not?" Hee. Aeryn astutely points out that with all the heavy baggage between him and Durka, she doesn't think she entered into the interaction at all. She does add, though, that she thinks Rygel handled himself well, an assessment with which Rygel agrees, not that he's not entitled to that. When Rygel brags that he beat Durka at his own game, however, Aeryn smirks and leans in: "You just compared yourself to a Peacekeeper." Rygel considers that, and the moments when the characters on *Moya* realize, deep down, just how similar they all are are really the ones to savor.

Crichton amusedly walks in on Zhaan's attempts to treat a fussy Chiana's wound. Crichton asks how the patient is, and Zhaan sniffs that she's a brat. Crichton playfully asks if they should kick her off the ship. Zhaan: "Ask me tomorrow." Hee. She leaves, and Crichton more seriously tells Chiana that *Moya* is gathering her strength for starburst, so they should be safe from the Nebari. I'm kind of curious how the Nebari are so effective in battle, since they seem to get to their destination at about the same relative speed as Durka talks. Chiana's relieved, but Crichton tells her they have rules on the ship. Chiana smiles: "Yeah? Well, when I see any of you following them, so will I." I now see that, among her many traits that were regarded as liabilities on her homeworld, we can now add perceptiveness. Crichton says he's easy, and I think even this far out in the galaxy, you'd have to search long and hard to find anyone who thinks that's bad news. His point is, though, that the others on the ship won't be so forgiving. Chiana says maybe she'll just get off at the next planet, and Crichton tells her she's welcome to do whatever she wants, but asks her where she was when Salis

was killed. Chiana smiles, but once Crichton's gone, her expression grows serious as she considers what she did. And that's a pretty solid way to introduce a new character.

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<http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/show/farscape/a-human-reaction/>

## - A Human Reaction -

-- Page 1 --

This recap is written from my DVD, which might differ from what you've seen due to broadcast differences in the U.S./UK -- I don't think it really matters, but between writing for the [Battlestar Galactica](#) and the [Firefly](#) fans, I know it can be deeply upsetting when the details don't match up with what you've watched a hundred million times. This is me apologizing in advance for the extra dialogue and editing differences. This version's better anyhow. Thanks to the 'Scaper posters in the forums who contributed a great deal to a wonderful charity to make this recap happen. You rock. I hope this makes you happy.

Short shot of Moya flying through space, and then a roller-coaster shot that zooms around an interior corridor (um, also known as "the" interior corridor). There's a dreamlike feeling to almost the entire episode, even after things get rough, that should clue you in to the fact that something weird is going on. John Crichton records another message to his father -- "It's always the same here, Dad: nice and quiet" -- and we cut ironically (John's not exactly a surgeon of irony) to Zhaan and Chiana, bickering as they wander down the corridor. Zhaan is blue and bald and gorgeous, a priestess with a secret Wolverine crazy side, and Chiana is gray and a freak and gorgeous, a mutant member of a scary-orthodox race, and has a not-so-secret crazy side. She's kind of like the obnoxious little sister, while Zhaan is the mothering, insufferably patient one. We won't be seeing them again, so live it up. Zhaan's bitching at Chiana for stealing her stuff, and Chiana's acting irrepressible about it, and Zhaan's concerned that, when they let Chiana onboard Moya, she promised at least to *try* not to steal everybody's shit. "You promised to adapt to our ways," Zhaan reminds her, and Chiana does her usual: "I've changed my mind! *You* 'adapt' to *me*!" She plays cute so much of the time that you forget how fucked up she actually is, which is good, because when you have to think about it, it's *awful*.

The fighting recedes into the distance as John continues his message in the maintenance bay. He seems to be having a tough time of it, talking into his recorder, which has been established as his kind of depressing, futile way of keeping in touch with Earth. He laughs tiredly and stretches. "It's late...No. It's space. I don't really know what time it is. It's, uh..." Close in on John, meaning it: "I miss the sun. Days. Nights. Simple things." The past seven months haven't been easy on John: he got sucked through a wormhole while working for (just call it NASA) IASA, accidentally killed an insane military commander's brother, ended up on a living ship with a bunch of jacked-up escaped prisoners, caught 'roid rage, brain-screwed a creepy alien that looked like [Debi Mazar](#), fell a little bit in love with two different Sebacean chicks, joined a cult, got kidnapped by a psychic vampire-slash-*clown*, got kidnapped by

*another* cult, had more brain-sex -- this time with Zhaan -- and went native on a random planet. He's *tired*, and he's homesick, and he's just discovered his first gray hair: "I wouldn't mention it, it's just that...I'm afraid I might be growing old out here." Wouldn't you? Moya's Pilot distracts him, calling him up to command. He hops up to go deal with whatever the next huge problem is, and whispers to himself, "...Can't deal with this."

-- Page 2 --

Down in command, we can hear the sounds of Moya's engines winding down. Rygel, the hungry Muppet with an inflated sense of personal worth, complains about that. Pilot explains to John that they've noticed something -- a thing they haven't seen since John first arrived onboard. It's a wormhole. Pilot warns him that it's unstable, already breaking apart, and Chiana wanders in as Rygel addresses them all, self-righteously: "That is a pathetic little waste funnel, of which I care little about. We're supposed to be on our way to [a] commerce planet where, I believe, they have Hynerian marjools." He giggles. A Hynerian is what Rygel is, in addition to being a deposed monarch.

Marjools are best not talked about. Chiana's concerned about whether John is or is not the captain of Moya, because she doesn't think he should be allowed to stop the ship for any old reason. She's only just come aboard, so she and John don't have a relationship: she's just bitching about any semblance of authority. Which she hasn't had a whole lot of opportunity to do, considering that there's not a single person on the ship who knows what the hell is going on, because they are all crazy. Rygel and Chiana are not getting why the wormhole is important to John, because all they understand is stuff having to do with Rygel and Chiana. Pilot screams for John to look closer at the wormhole: at the other side, you can see a planet that pretty much looks like Earth. John is wounded by hope, as Rygel and a badly-looped Chiana continue to scoff. The show's theme song, gone ethereal and weird, plays as John stares through the wormhole: "That's Earth. That's my home."

Credits. The most beautiful thing about maybe this entire show is the way the credit sequences change from season to season, updating the story boilerplate while mirroring John's adaptations to his situation. "I'm just looking for a way home" becomes "Look upward, and share the wonders I've seen." There's a lot of emotion coded into those little changes. It gives me chills every time.

Aeryn's sitting against a wall, somewhere else, brooding. Aeryn was a Peacekeeper, a soldier, before she met Crichton and got exiled. Now she's nothing, trying to learn to be something else. Earlier, when the crew was doing pretty hideous things to each other on the off chance that they'd be able to find maps to their various homes, John promised her that she could come home with him, since she no longer has a home, or a people, of her own. It was pretty devastating, and they've kissed since then, but the subject really hasn't come up again, because John and Aeryn are still busy being *idiots*. John approaches her, wearing his IASA flightsuit. "You're going, now?" she asks, refusing to look him in the eye. "Yeah, Pilot says we're runnin' out of time," says John. He's got a southern accent that comes and goes, depending on how freaked out he is. I'd put this scene at about a 6. "I can't go with you," says Aeryn, cold as stone. John complains that this is possibly their only chance to find home. Aeryn: "No, this is your only chance. I'm not certain I'll belong there." John promises that she will, but she shakes her head, swallows, apologizes. Pilot calls down to John that the

wormhole is continuing to destabilize, and he looks at Aeryn awhile before standing. "I'm on my way," he calls to Pilot, and turns away. She looks at where he was standing. It's easy to blow this off, because we know how their relationship will twist and turn, but this is the beginning. This is Aeryn, terrified, not even beginning to understand what John meant when he said she could be "more." She's still empty. The last thing she needs is to go to a place where everybody knows John but still looks at her funny.

-- Page 3 --

Zhaan and Rygel are waiting for John in the maintenance bay, where his small craft, the *Farscape*, stands ready. Zhaan warns him of the danger of traveling through the wormhole, the instability of it, the fact that he could end up anywhere. She's really just begging him to stay. She's always loved him, from the beginning; she went all Sith to save him from Maldis, giving up everything that means anything. They've shared Unity, they've been one soul. She loves John more than anybody, even D'Argo (maybe Rygel, although Zhaan would never admit it). John checks over his module, knowing what Zhaan's actually saying: "It could kill me, Zhaan, I know. You've given me every good reason not to go. I could end up dead, I could end up more lost than I already am. You've given me every single thing except one." She's so not feeling any of this. "This could be Earth. This is the way I got here, through a wormhole. Could be my way home." I don't see how Zhaan can argue this, considering that she was willing to torture Pilot for her own opportunity -- and that was even before she went all dork-sided. "However this works out, this could be goodbye." John thanks her for the many times she's saved his crazy bacon, and then thanks them all. Zhaan smiles peacefully, looks down. This whole show is a series of goodbyes.

Pilot nags John about the wormhole as D'Argo enters, with a bag of John's stuff. D'Argo's a gigantic man-lion with face tentacles. He is awesome. He shoves Rygel -- who's in his ridiculous floating Jazzy -- out of the way as he approaches. It's hilarious. John and D'Argo are boys together. "Goodbye, big guy. I um...I hope you get your chance one day," says John. They can't even look at each other, almost. D'Argo extends his hand for an Earthling handshake, and D'Argo's strong, and beautiful: "Goodbye, John." John puts his hand against Zhaan's cheek, recalling their Unity. She does the same to him. It's rough. "John Crichton," she says. "Remember. There's a part of me, inside you." A tear runs down her cheek as she whispers, "Take care of it." He wipes the tear away and promises that he will. He moves on to Rygel -- picture [Donald Trump](#), only two feet tall and green -- who furrumps and won't smile. "Sparky," says John, as Aeryn appears in the doorway, looking on. John tells Rygel -- who's a hoarder -- that he's giving all of his stuff onboard to Aeryn, so Rygel can't have it. She smiles as Rygel begins to rage about it; Aeryn trains her eyes on John's face, memorizing it. Rygel looks up at John, about to freak out, and sees John's wide grin. He begins to laugh, because that's the kind of joke Rygel thinks is really funny. John looks across the bay at Aeryn, in the doorway. They stare at each other for a good long time, Aeryn's face hard and soft: "Dare me to cry, motherfucker." He says goodbye, and she nods sharply, looking anywhere else. He turns away, and she fights off her tears. D'Argo watches her fight with herself for a while -- they've always fought, and met in the middle, about being soldiers, and now they meet again in the new territory of love, loving John, and there's nothing he can do for her -- and then she



takes off. Even in the just morning of their relationship, John's the only home Aeryn's got. And she's too weak to leave with him, and that's something she has to deal with, alone. Sucks to be Aeryn, a lot of the time, but she's pretty cool about it. Way less of a whiner than, say, John.

-- Page 4 --

The music abruptly changes as we see John's module leaving Moya. He maneuvers it over the wormhole and checks in with Pilot, who's still worried about him cutting it too close as the wormhole continues to degrade. In command, the whole screwed-up crew watches. Pilot talks John through the navigations, and shouts when it's time for him to go. John is paralyzed, at the edge of the wormhole, too scared to go in, too scared to stay lost. (*Buffy*'s got the Hellmouth, *Farscape*'s got the wormholes, which starting with this episode pretty much slowly take over the show, for good reason. Even *Stargate* has, you know, the Stargates. Even *Dune*'s got those huge traveling birth canals that change reality and perception with their excretions. Didn't *Deep Space Nine* have something similar? On the other side was God. On the other side is always God, or something just as wonderful, and just as scary. You come out of them reborn, and if you go back in, you turn into something else every time. Most genre shows are created by men. Just a thought. If the Giant Space Vagina Theory of Science Fiction creeps you out, I don't know that this is the show for you, because the relatively sterile wormholes are only the tip of the iceberg, in terms of the Rabelaisian goings-on in which this show excels. There's a reason the show is such a neverending [dorky descent into the Australian BDSM scene](#), as they say.) D'Argo, as the only other man onboard, gets it: "Crichton." He snaps John out of it as the rest of them yell insults. "...Yeah, D'Argo." Aeryn swallows, victim of her own, parallel choice paralysis, as D'Argo talks John through it: "I understand the fear. But if you don't do this now, you will regret it forever. You must go, now. Do it, John." John's face hardens, as back on deck, Aeryn stands, quietly breaking. She has nothing to add, because she just had the same choice, and wasn't strong enough to take it. "Thanks, big guy," says John, and hangs his dad's puzzle-ring, given him the day this adventure began, *around his joystick*, asking his father for luck as he drops down into the wormhole. Circles and circles: the ring's on a chain, the ring goes around your *finger*, the chain goes around your *joystick*, the joystick takes you down into the *giant wormhole*. John has his father's blessing; at the end of the tunnel lies home.

-- Page 5 --

Back on Moya, they lose visual contact with John. D'Argo, tearing up, calls out to John in the silence. Zhaan confirms with Pilot that John's off their sensors: "He's gone." D'Argo and Rygel lower their heads, alone in their grief. Zhaan prays. Aeryn looks on sadly, opens her mouth, nothing to say. If John could take *that* plunge, it kind of makes them both idiots for not acknowledging their simple feelings, doesn't it? But then there wouldn't be a show, I guess. This show does romantic tension better than anything ever. On the *Farscape*, John calls for Pilot, hears nothing. He continues to travel down the wormhole, surrounded in bright white light. This man's face, I tell you. The light becomes a glaring sun over a beautiful beach, where the *Farscape* sits, steaming and smoking. John opens the hatch, and we fade to him, squinting into the sun. In dreamy slow motion, John's got the funny legs, and finally lets himself fall on

his back, in the sand. He laughs, a big laugh. A home laugh. "Helloooo sky!" he shouts.

We fade again, now to John approaching a woman walking down the beach. We can see that he's crash-landed in an urban area, buildings in the distance. "I know this is gonna sound insane, but...this is Australia. Right?" I assume that he was able to pick it out off the globe as he was hurtling toward it at incredible speed. The woman stares, and seems a little frightened, but we realize that she's looking past him, up at the bluff, where a helicopter rises and several soldiers approach. John waves to them, unafraid: he's military too. "Hey! Guys! Where you been?" His smiles fades as he notices that they all have guns pointed at him. Another man -- an incredibly Australian-looking man -- tops the bluff, in a dress shirt and slacks. He also pulls a weapon. "Wait, I'm John Crichton!" John screams, but the man -- Wilson is his name, sucking is his game -- fires, and a dart hits John in the leg. He pulls it out and looks at it, and then turns to run in slow motion. Under very, very bad '80s sci-fi music, John begins to stumble, and falls onto his back. He rolls around for a second, and we close on his eyes, twitching and rolling, and he's out.

Fade in and out as John's examined in a white room. They draw blood and stare, and he's out of it. Fade.

"Let's go again," says Wilson. John's now pissed as hell, fully awake, and stuck inside a concrete and glass containment cell. "So why did you land in Australia?" A soldier snaps a photograph. "I didn't land," says John. "I crashed." Flash. The pictures are grainy and cool, like an old-time GQ spread. "And what is your mission, here?" John -- straddled on a chair, brow furrowed -- whines that there is no mission, beyond what he previously stated in the credits. "Have you been here before?" asks Wilson. John's exasperated: "I'm *John Crichton*. You *know* that, Wilson." As Wilson stares at him, John starts to finally figure it out: "You think I'm an alien?!" Wilson laughs and repeats the question, again. Flash. "Australia. Yeah. Three times. You were here with me, last year, when I tested the *Farscape*'s engines, Wilson. So what the hell is going on?" Flash.

-- Page 6 --

Fade in on an African man, speaking to John through the glass. Translator microbes have never mattered more than they do in this episode, so briefly: in all the cultures other than Earth that John has encountered, translator microbes are injected at birth. They take up residence in the brainstem, and translate for the carrier (and us). What this means is that John -- or Aeryn, or D'Argo -- can understand all languages, but can only speak his own, or whatever languages he actually learns to speak. "This is the twelfth guy, Wilson. How many more are you gonna roll in here, before you believe these are translator microbes in my head, and not some space virus?" Wilson sips coffee behind the guy, still all business. "What did he say?" "Well," says John slowly, his eyebrows and jaw doing that resolute thing that means he's actually focusing on what's going on, "I think he said that until he gets some answers, he's not gonna play anymore." Just in case Wilson's not aware of the power of the eyebrows, or the jaw, John rolls backward in his chair, then rises and retreats against the far wall, as far back as he can go.

Later, John's acting more like himself, zipping back and forth across the cell on his office chair, calling out to a soldier named Cobb who's sitting studiously reading his

paper outside. They talk, but Cobb won't look at him. "Can I get a newspaper? Come on, Cobb! What am I gonna find out?...Look, I've been away, for-- What'd you say? Seven months? I just wanna know what's happened. Something. Since I've been gone. Who won the Super Bowl, Cobb?" Cobb raises his head and stares at just nothing, for several seconds, like he's accessing some kind of database or something. It's not a normal act. Finally, he says, "I don't know." John needles him: "I know you're Australian, Cobb, but you gotta know who won the Super Bowl! You know who Ty Cobb is, Cobb? No? How about Babe Ruth? You know who Babe Ruth is?" The southern accent is in full effect: John's losing it. Cobb: "Some fat guy that played for the Yankees." John does his wacky dancing around. "Good! Fat guy! At least you know something!"

The containment cell is in a huge hangar. Elsewhere in it, Wilson's at a desk checking over some sketches from John's experiences. There's a very pretty line drawing of Rygel. "You're kidding me!" The sketch artist is like, "I know, right?" Thank God there's no Scorpius yet, or they'd have to condemn John as a deviant. "No, seriously, I know it looks like your worst bondage nightmare, but see, he's only half-Sebacean, so he has to wear this whole outfit..." A soldier starts yelling at one of the hangar doors, trying to keep somebody out. It's John's very incredibly awesome dad, Jack, [last seen](#) comforting his son before the ill-fated flight of the *Farscape*. He's being very Crichton père here, all, "Out of my way!" and "Back off, soldier!" as they try to obstruct him. Wilson orders Cobb to turn off John's speakers as Jack approaches. The last thing we hear is John screaming, "Dad!" Jack yells at Wilson that he's been waiting two days to see his son, and Wilson's still chill: "Jack, that's what we're trying to determine. Whether it is your son." Behind Wilson, John screams, jumping, pounding on the glass, heartbreaking. Given their history, I'd imagine this is a nightmare John's had before: seeing his father, unable to speak to him, his father unable to hear his voice, calling out; so close to him, but unable to touch him. Wilson tells Jack, "He's got foreign microbes in his brain stem. And the *Farscape* module has been modified with non-human technology. You know how this works, Colonel. Once we confirm John poses no threat, then you can see him." Jack's not feeling it.

-- Page 7 --

Immediate cut to Jack, having taken care of those assholes somehow, entering the cell. John's so happy to see his dad, so tired and desperate: "Dad. Get me out of here, please." Jack hates the conditions: "I need to ask you some questions," he murmurs, sick. John is minorly taken aback at the idea that his dad's siding against him with IASA. Again. This is a show that can't turn down the opportunity to go back to kindergarten with old John on a regular basis. On the other hand, the only thing worse than seeing John at the absolute edge of losing it, as normal, is seeing him happy, because that's when you know the awful shit is really going to come down. He snorts, and they stand, silent. Jack crosses around behind John so that he won't have to look at his son's hurt and accusation, and asks, "What happened on your tenth birthday?" John's confused for a second, and Jack can't meet his eyes. John: "I don't know. I can't remember." Jack leads him, reminding him that they were living in Annapolis. "Annapolis? Right. You were late. Again." Jack falls, because the guilt of his career choices, and the sight of seeing the continuing effect they have on his grown son, are two different sides of the same pain. "Why?" asks Jack. "You said," John says,

sighing, remembering, "you said they held you at Houston for tests. You missed your flight. But you commandeered a jet and you came, anyway." Jack smiles a little, and nods. "I woke you up at 4 o'clock in the morning." Jack took his son fishing, John remembers, and Jack nods again, nearly crying. "And you caught the biggest damn bass I'd ever seen." John, stung: "It was a *trout*, Dad." (Note: if John and Jack ever meet again, this will be the question, because it sums up the sadder, scarred side of their history. It was a trout, not a bass, and even in remembering Jack can't help but screw it up, and that stays with John.) Jack swallows, but nods: "It was a trout. I missed you, son." They embrace, holding tight, and Jack sighs in relief. John's almost gone. He whispers softly, "What's going on? I know recovery procedure as well as anyone. This is way beyond routine." But Jack's on it: "Nothing's been routine since the day you left, seven months ago. That wormhole you went through is still there. You opened a door, son. A door to Earth we don't know how to close." John whispers, "Get me out of here," and Jack promises he will. Promises all of it, squeezing his eyes shut, holding his son, once lost and now found.

-- Page 8 --

Jack and his son stand on a pier at the beach, John's seven-month bout of paranoia reasserting itself: "I don't buy this, Dad...Wilson, letting me out. There's no way he'd let me out of his sight, if what you say is true." Jack's surprised that John knows Wilson, and Cobb, but explains to John that they're surrounded: "See that van in the parking lot? Those two women to our right? The one in the red, with the headphones? The one sunning herself on the rocks?" We consider these spies, again in dreamlike slow motion: "They're watching us." John watches one older man in a Speedo rising out of the water. "They like to get real close." How close? Jack removes an eagle pin from his jacket, and radio sounds can be heard. He drops it into the water below them, and a crab crawls around on it all, "Breaker breaker? I'm just a lowly crustacean." Jack exposit that there's a global alliance that's been set up to track the wormhole, and that Ray Wilson is the Pentagon's chosen point man. John asks what the hell Wilson wants, and Jack's no happier about it: "He wants you relaxed, so that I can tell whether or not you're really my son." John's like, "OMG already, dude!" Jack continues: "And he wants to know everything you know about the wormhole, and everything you saw on the other side." John scoffs, because he's obviously spilling everything he knows. Jack respects that. John takes out his puzzle ring and hands it over: more proof. "I kept that safe for you," he tells Jack. "Don't know if it brought me luck but it saved my ass." True, and a hearty round of applause for the ring for that particular giant favor, but also: and Aeryn's ass, and D'Argo's ass. And Aeryn's soul. Jack finally admits to his stages of grief when John disappeared. "Well, now you know," says John. "Now you know how I felt as a kid, every time you went on a mission." The accent comes and goes. Jack ignores this total foul, and puts his hand on John's shoulder. "Come on, son. We've got a lot of work to do."

Helicopters buzz about busily as guards patrol the hangar. Cobb stares at the wormhole on his screen, and John and Wilson walk through the hangar. John's really enjoying a chocolate bar: "They have worlds out there. People out there that you wouldn't believe. But they do not have chocolate." ["Neither do I, at this moment, and suddenly it's making me sad." -- *Wing Chun*] John stops short. "Hang on a second." John approaches a tech who's futzing around with one of the extra pieces John added

to the *Farscape*. "Hey, no," says John. "Don't do it like that. It's a propulsion fin; it's part of the Hetch drive, okay?" He's a scientist first. Remember when John was just a scientist, and never had to fight or kill? Remember how much happier he was. Walking away, John stops again with a déjà vu: "Have we met?" The tech stutters: "Last year in the Simpson Desert, uh, when you were down there for the shuttle tests." He looks and talks exactly like the boy version of Naomi Watts in *Tank Girl*. "You were with Cobb, right?" Jet Boy assents. "Right. Well, it's, um...it's good to see you again."

-- Page 9 --

The Moya transport pod flies down over Earth clouds. Those kids just cannot leave well enough alone. It's sweet, really. I hope they don't pay a horrible price. Cobb wigs and calls Wilson over to the screen, saying that something's just come through the wormhole. Wilson summons John and tells him that F-16s are scrambling for a visual: "Are they here for you? Are they here to save you?" John's at a loss. Wilson shoves him in front of the screen. I hate Wilson, but I really like the plausible deniability: he hasn't done a single thing wrong. Yet. The only reason we hate him is that he's being mean to John, and we like John. As the F-16s lock onto the Moya transport pod, Wilson screams at John again and again. The image finally becomes clear enough for John to see properly: "Wait, that's Moya's transport pod. Tell them not to fire." Wilson's still worried. "They're not here to harm us, Wilson," John insists. "Just tell them not to fire!" Wilson kind of shrugs, still yelling about how that's not his call, and John gets terribly desperate: "Wilson, they don't have any weapons on board the transport! Tell them not to fire!" They stare at each other for several seconds, and Wilson gives in. The transport pod comes in for a landing...

...and we fade to D'Argo on a gurney. Medical crew and soldiers bring in Rygel and Aeryn and D'Argo -- which explains why we had that random Chiana/Zhaan screentime scene up front, but I'm not questioning it, because they're both anarchists, and the whole quarantine thing would have gone even worse than it will, if you can even imagine that -- each lying on a stretcher, in a long, slow, white procession. Fade to John and his three friends, back in the containment cell. Given that this whole episode amounts to a Bene Gesserit test of Crichton's level of human enlightenment, it's interesting that these three now accompany him. You've got the cold anger of Aeryn and the hot rage of D'Argo, both warriors, and you've got the uncensored id of Rygel. Neither the higher self, Zhaan, nor trickster Chiana, half Rygel and half John himself, has any place in this ritual. This is about harsh realities, the human reaction -- no prayer, no wild cards. Aeryn's wearing her kick-ass black Peacekeeper suit, a nice nod to the way she's turned her separation anxiety into warlike worry for John's safety. They're all such fucking hypocrites, I love it: "I didn't miss you or anything, fag. I just thought they were going to kill you. Stop hugging me." "After you left," says Aeryn -- and can we talk about the voice, for a second? You could bottle her voice and you would make a billion bucks but you still wouldn't have approached everything that makes her wonderful -- "your Earth disappeared through the wormhole." Rygel betrays her: "It was her idea to see what was going on."

-- Page 10 --

Outside the cell, everyone hears Rygel in his native tongue. He continues, and because we're outside now, there are subtitles. "But don't think for a minute we were going after you." Aeryn speaks, and it sounds like [backwards dwarf](#) talk, but I'm told

that it's actually Claudia Black just doing her own little alien voice. She's so cool: "I just wanted to get a closer look, but the wormhole caught us and pulled us in. There was nothing I could do." Yeah, right. When in doubt, leave it up to fate. She's not earning it -- she didn't jump in the same way John did -- but she did jump in, and that's strong. John notices that Rygel is looking like hell, and it's a credit to the Jim Henson Creature Shop that you can even tell. "I'm frelling sick!" shouts Rygel, and again, Wilson's worried. John speaks without turning to the window: "They're scared, Wilson. That's what they're saying." Rygel gets all up on his uppity self: "I'm not scared! I'm sick! What the yotz did you give me?" D'Argo hisses and jumps at the glass. Jack calls into the room, asking if John's okay, and John rolls his eyes, because even with all the screaming and throwing of bodies at the windows, this is still calmer than most leisure times aboard Moya. D'Argo growls, and John explains to Rygel that it's the tranks: "It'll run off soon; you're gonna be okay." And Rygel, hating pain and loving pleasure as he does, whines, "Why are they treating me like this?" It's nominally pathetic, I guess.

I'll tell you right now, I have zero sympathy for Rygel. Not an episode goes by where I don't cross my fingers that he'll get airlocked. But that's the point of a lot of this show's ongoing themes: suck it up, because no matter how loathsome the little shit acts, he still depends on you, and in the end, while Zhaan's all very nice and good, you get closer to God by loving Rygel. Her spiritual ivory tower bullshit didn't do an ounce of good for her, when she got knocked down -- and her entire self-hating, scary story arc is precisely *about* her inability to recognize or acknowledge, let alone *love*, her inner Rygel, the beast that eats and fucks and shits and will hurt a friend in the blink of an eye for personal gratification. And maybe that's why Zhaan loves John, savage that he is, as much as she does, as much as we do: because on some level, he gets that. He's better in a personal crisis than she is, for sure -- she just doesn't have them as much. "They're freaking out," John comforts Rygel. "You're an alien, and they're freaking out." He's so sad and so tired and...the thing about John is that it was one thing to be stuck in here, it nearly drove him crazy after so much time lost in the black, but what really kills him is seeing his friends in the same situation. He is good. "I vowed I would never be taken prisoner again," says D'Argo, saying the same thing in warrior terms, and John tries to explain the difference: "You're not a prisoner. Trust me. I'm gonna take care of you guys." Rygel whines again, to the only person who ever shows him kindness -- even Zhaan barely does, and it's generally pretty condescending on those rare occasions -- "Crichton, I feel frelling terrible." (About the "yotz" and the "frelling" and so forth: it's the translator microbes; they may be small but they're as scared as anyone of the FCC. You get over it.) John goes to the door to ask for help for Rygel, looking at D'Argo, who breathes slowly, and there's an unavoidable stacking of the emotional deck here, because like it or not, these are *John's people* doing this, and there's no clearer sign of that awkwardness than the fact that John can come and go. Even if you know better, there's an inescapable feeling that John is somehow allied with them.

-- Page 11 --

John questions his father outside. Like it or not, these are *Jack's people* doing this and Jack's been pulling this crap since John was little, and even if you know better, as an adult, there's still the feeling that your dad is still somehow picking them over his



son. "What's going on?" John demands. "What's takin' so long?" Jack begs John to relax, but John's getting tired of all this mumbo-jumbo: "And do what, Dad? Read a magazine? They're all seven months old, Dad! They don't want me to have any idea what's going on." John stares at the table as Jack speaks: "If what you say about those aliens is true, they can help us unlock the universe. You're positive they're not here to harm us?" John almost rolls his eyes at the idea that any person on Moya could possibly have it that together. "They came looking for me," he says. "They were worried." And if the accent always comes back when John's with Jack, is that because it's hard, or because he still idolizes him? Was it a trout, or a bass? "You trust them?" asks Jack. John's like, "A fucking bomb more than Wilson, duh." "I like them," he tells his father. "They're my friends." There's a bit of an edge here, like when your work friends meet your regular friends or whatever: "I know they have a bunch of tattoos and tend to talk about *Star Wars* more than normal people, but come on, they're nice." Cobb shows up and, for no reason except to further the plot/experiment/ritual, brings John to the medical unit. John sees something awful on the table, and comes closer. Lying on the table is Rygel's corpse, vivisected, his entire abdomen cut and stretched open. You know Inanna? Sumerian goddess, an Ishtar/Aphrodite type. Don't yell, I'm going somewhere with this. She went to see her sister Ereshkigal, or Death, and at each of seven gates she gave up her clothing, her jewels, everything that made her *her*, until she finally got to the bottom, naked, to be tested and reborn. In John's trip through the wormhole, this holy test of him, he's lost Zhaan and he's lost Chiana, and Moya and Pilot, due to the plot concerns. He enters without faith, without youth, without a home, without a compass. And now with Rygel dead, he's lost worldly concerns, body, all thoughts of pleasure. John has his anger, and he has love, and he has his father, and that's all he's got. It's a fairy tale. (I know I tend to get like this, but it's only with the stories that tell these truths: it's a fairy tale. Just be happy I never recapped *Buffy*. Or, speaking of stripped Inanna, [Wonderfalls](#). My God.) John's face goes soft, and hard. You can see Rygel's organs, his body laid open to dissection, the gross matter of his body gone cold. He's a walking stomach, and that stomach is laid open. John's lips go all woggly and he sees Wilson, spying through the window.

-- Page 12 --

John storms across the hangar, flinging papers and stuff left and right: "Wilson. We've spent our *lives* waiting for this moment! We sent *Voyager*, we left damn greeting cards on the moon, and as soon as they get here, look at what you're doing!" It's the human reaction. He stares. "They can help us. Just take a step back and you look at what you're doing. You think about it!" Wilson exits: "Don't worry. I've thought of everything, Commander." He's more right than John can comprehend. John mutters, hating the next thing: "You make me sick."

Back in the containment cell, John takes on his father's role again, as voice of the bad guys, hating every word: "Official word is...Rygel died from allergic reaction to the tranquilizer." Aeryn's not buying it; D'Argo pushes further: "And what do you think happened?" "It doesn't..." John swallows, about to cry, or maybe puke. "...matter what I think, D'Argo," he concludes. He looks up at Aeryn, who looks away, and hardens. "No," says John. "I think they killed him." D'Argo: "You know that those animals killed him!" And Aeryn, quieter, throat raw. "And then they cut him open." John protests that they were trying to restart Rygel's heart, but nobody's buying, including John. "They

were studying him! Like an animal. Like an alien. Which one of us do you think they'll kill next, Crichton?" I'm guessing D'Argo. We've seen this story before. "D'Argo, it...it's not gonna go down like that," says John. He's broken; this is a travesty of denial. "Look, I know that you have no reason to trust me..." and D'Argo tells John he's fucking right. Aeryn's just gone cold. "You tell them," D'Argo says, cold and logical, "that when they come for me, I'll kill them." Against John's pleas, D'Argo continues. "We've tried it your way, and one of us is dead." Aeryn raises her head, looking at the wall, as D'Argo dismisses John: "Go." John crouches in front of Aeryn, begging her to look; she finally meets his eyes, sickened: "You know, Crichton, Peacekeepers wouldn't even kill their prisoners to study them." She just doesn't know yet, she's clinging to the same pack of lies that John now is, but we don't know that yet. (How is it that every episode of this show is a fucking monster cryfest of emotional horror -- or a ridiculous display of adolescent fart humor -- and yet never really seems all that overwrought? It tells these truths; it's a fairy tale.) Aeryn shakes her head almost imperceptibly, exhausted: "D'Argo's right. Just go." John looks at them, in turn; sighs; heads for the door. Aeryn covers her mouth, unsure how to cry. John asks for release, and leaves the cell.

-- Page 13 --

John stands outside the building, leaning over a balcony, ripped apart, as Jack approaches. "I gave them my word, Dad," says John. "I told them I'd take care of them." The accent's at a 10. "You were naïve to think you could protect them from people like Wilson," says Jack. John turns around and looks away from his father, too naked: "I need a favor, Dad." Jack nods, and, simple as anything: "Name it." John asks Jack to call in "every marker" he has, "every General, every Undersecretary, every Pentagon mistress," and tell them what's happening to his friends: "And you get them to stop it." He turns back toward the building. Even Jack knows the eyebrows and jaw: "What are you gonna do, son?" John lies that he's going to plead with Wilson, beg for their lives, but Jack knows better: "You be careful." John smiles, because nobody knows what the last seven months have done, what he's capable of. It's heartbreaking, to see this and think how far across the line from scientist he already is; to respect and mourn that, knowing how far he'll still go. Jack doesn't know. Jack thinks John will get hurt. John, with a tiny hard smile, says, "I'm just gonna make him understand, Dad." Jack, scared now: "Son, are you willing to die for those creatures in there?" John levels Jack with the unassailable simplicity of his response, speaking the language they both know: "I gave my word." Jack is sad; John leaves him.

John walks through the hangar -- we see the *Farscape*, parts all over, a guy with a gun -- past the cell, and into the medical unit. The exam table is covered with fresh white towels. So clean. Like Rygel was never even there. John walks around the table, noticing a soldier's feet, a man lying on the floor. He crouches to check on him, holding his feet, thinking fast. Aeryn cocks a rifle at his head, silent and stealthy: "Did I kill him?" She didn't. "Are you with me? Or them?" she asks. So fast, and she's back to the Aeryn John first met. To be exiled by your home culture is one thing -- to be jailed and dissected by the culture you'd considered joining is to realize your worst possible fears. This is a woman raised in a soldier crèche, contact with her parents not allowed, raised to live and die by her army, a person who has no concept of

solitude. And this woman has been bounced twice, out of that, in the last year. And now she's attacked a fellow soldier. "I'm with you, Aeryn," says John. "Trust me. Put down the gun." She slowly angles it away from his face. "Do they know you're out?" he asks. She nods: "They took D'Argo somewhere, and when the guard came back for me, I was ready for him." She's still choking on it. That's two down. We won't see D'Argo again. John lost his anger sometime between the scene with Jack and now -- and if not his anger, his rage, because it's not about him anymore and it never really was -- and only now does he have the peace to calm Aeryn, his hand on her knee, almost holding her up, holding her steady: "Where'd they take him?" Aeryn's like, "I don't fucking know and I'm not sticking around to find out." John nods: "All right, then. Let's move." John exits and Aeryn follows, with adorable and almost hilarious Peacekeeper precision, heels clicking, gun in hand. She knows this part.

-- Page 14 --

Further into the building, Aeryn knocks out a soldier, and John approaches Cobb in the break room: "Hey, Cobb. You find out who won the Super Bowl, yet?" Again, Cobb doesn't look up: "What do you want, Crichton?" Aeryn enters from a side door, Crichton holding Cobb's eyes, and points her gun at him. She speaks to him in her language, and this time we don't get any subtitles, because we don't need them: "Don't fucking move, bitch." Cobb's confused, and Aeryn speaks again, checking all the exits. John: "She says that she wants to shoot you, Cobb." No doubt. "I don't know if it's a good idea, or not, but I figure since you've pushed us this far, it doesn't really matter, does it? Where's D'Argo?" Cobb looks over at Aeryn, and then smiles at John: "They flew him to another base. He's gone, Crichton. You can't save him." It's only a test. Aeryn bonks Cobb's head with the butt of her gun, and John muscles him into a sitting position and rips off his ID badge: "If you'd only been reasonable!" He takes Cobb's gun: "You're wrong in what you're doing here, Cobb. You're wrong." Cobb asks politely that John not shoot him. John knocks Cobb out, and heads for the door, gun still trained on him. "You're wrong!" He kicks him brutally. "That's for Rygel." That's a human reaction too.

Then comes the very best part of this episode, and maybe one of the best of the series, and the secret reason I was so happy you guys picked this one. John and Aeryn are walking down a sidewalk, in the rain. "Aeryn, pick it up," says John. "I want to get out of this rain." She opens her mouth, smiling, and tastes the raindrops on her tongue. When John offered to bring her home with him, this was the Aeryn he imagined. Beautiful, delighted. She grew up in steel and concrete and plastic, her whole life lived in soldier readiness. This is the more that she could be: this woman, a child for a moment, in love with the wonder of the rain. In love with the universe, outside the walls of Peacekeeper Carriers and Moya, in love with all its mysteries. Even if John's not feeling particularly welcome at home right now, Aeryn can carry it for him for a time, because this is the home he was missing, and the home he tried to give her. Aeryn: "Rain. Is that what you call this? I like it." John's scarier half, his warrior half, the part of him he'll always fear, is falling in love with Earth, touching her, tasting her, even as John's pulling away. And that's what you get for jumping into a wormhole: everything.

-- Page 15 --

Clearly, there is sex in the near future. John uses Cobb's badge to jimmy the lock on a condo, explaining that he and Jack stayed there last year. Aeryn's immediately suspicious, covering the entire yard with her gun: "Crichton, he is with them. This is the first place they will look for us!" John says he trusts his father, but Aeryn has no context for that, and she watches flank as he finally gets the door open. "Ladies first," he says, and she rolls her eyes as she enters.

Later, John looks out the room window, at the hazy city and overcast sky. Thunder rumbles. It's beautiful out there, and among the many technical joys of this episode, the lighting in this entire scene is just sick awesome. John's wearing a white tank, she's got her awesome soldiery underthings on, and very high-waisted slacks. She's holding a bottle, which John explains is beer, and she sniffs at it. John: "Trust me. It's just what we need, right now. Down the hatch." He takes a swig. She smiles slightly at him, and repeats it: "Down the hatch!" She tastes the beer, with her tongue, and quirks her head, as if to say that it is charming. "You like it?" he asks. She does: "It's like Fellip nectar. [The] Fellip's a creature on Tarsus, and they get the nectar from..." John stops her, shaking his head. "Aeryn, please. Don't tell me where it comes from, just drink the beer." She's like, "Um, okay?" but she keeps drinking. John apologizes, and Aeryn looks at him. "[For] everything. What's happened here. Getting you stuck on Moya. I mean, if it wasn't for me, you'd still be the....happy little Peacekeeper dominating the lesser races." Aeryn smiles lovingly: "Mm. I've got a lot to blame you for, Crichton." He whispers, staring out the window at the rainy city, "Look at that." She considers him. John: "That's it. Earth. Minus the sunshine." Police sirens ring out, bringing the proper amount of real-world beauty to the scene. "You know, you were right," she says. "It's actually very beautiful." John sits beside her on the bed, shoulder-to-shoulder, both of them slack and exhausted. "Were you scared to join me?" he asks. "When I left Moya?" Aeryn wonders if she can actually admit this to John, but everything else has fallen away: it's just them, now. In the whole world: "Yes." She nods and sighs, because the proof is in the quarantine and vivisection. "I won't be recaptured, Crichton. They will have to kill me, if they come to take me, tomorrow." He nods: "I know." They sit in the soft blue light. He sighs and lays his head on Aeryn's shoulder, looking out the window. He presses his lips against her shoulder, and she feels it. He pushes her head with his, forehead to forehead like always, more intimate than a kiss, and their faces are close. She's like a fawn, leaning in, and their faces are so close. She looks at him, his closed eyes. After about a million years -- and if you've ever tried to get either of these types into bed, you know it actually does take this long -- they kiss, gently at first. She tastes like the rain. They jump in, together.

-- Page 16 --

I'm not trying to be funny or anything when I tell you that as I was writing that last paragraph, [this song](#) came up on shuffle. I'm just a lowly crustacean, but: come on. Case closed.

The next morning, the sun is out, shining brightly over the city. (Now it's playing "Goldfinger," but God know what that means.) Aeryn sits in a chair, looking over a city map. She's wearing John's shirt and a black jacket and looks *painfully sexy*. John groans nudely from the bed, and Aeryn snaps, "Get out of bed, John. I've worked out that plan we talked about." He stutters: "Aeryn. Um...about last night." She's so

awesome: "Yes. It's fine, John, it's just not top priority, right now." That's my girl. John groans and lies back. Aeryn: "I've gone through all of these pictures and I've found a few places that seem to be uninhabited enough to hide in." He's exasperated: "Aeryn." She looks at him, then away, like, "Fuck, are you gonna girl out or what?" It's about as weird as if Tango and Cash had woken up in bed together, is basically how Aeryn's acting, and it's hilarious. She doesn't know about any of this stuff, and what she does know, she has many different kinds of vested interest in pretending she doesn't, as we'll see later on in the series. John agrees, after a moment of silence, that they have to find a place to hide. "[So] let's go," she says, all frisky and businesslike. John: "No, no, no. You're not going anywhere, dressed like that." I guess she's just too hot to leave the house, because I see nothing wrong with the outfit except for the retina-burning awesomeness of it on her, in the morning light. She looks down, and then up at him, and we're I think up for a humorous quick-cut...

Yes. In the condo's living room, Aeryn's fretting over her new clothes, as we focus on her in the mirror being weirded out. John's almost smiling, because it's as weird for him as it is for us to see her in what she's wearing. Which is a strapless sun dress, with a light green sweater, and the dress is intensely flowery...but maybe only five years out of date, if it's 1999. For such an intensely beautiful and feminine woman, she gives good drag queen. It's weird to even look at, and Aeryn knows it: "Are you sure about this?" And: really? Is the point that she shouldn't be leaving the house in anything but a dress? Because it's not 1955. I mean, it's funny as hell and I love it when she wears "Earth clothes" for just this reason, but...whatever. I'm sure I'm missing something. Maybe it's a size issue and the only clothes they could find were the ones left behind by the previous renters, who just happened to be the entire Ashley family. If that's the case, you'd think the furnishings would be uglier. John cuts himself off, comforting her, at a knock at the door. They rush forward, Aeryn of course pulling her gigantic gun, and Jack calls to his son from outside. "It's my father," says John in a library whisper, and Aeryn's vindicated and pretty scary, given the outfit: "I knew it! He's betrayed us! There'll be soldiers outside!" John's like, "Dude." He opens the door, and Jack steps inside just enough for John to close the door.

-- Page 17 --

"Are you okay, son?" John says he's okay, and archly indicates the woman with the dress and the gun. "Remember Aeryn Sun?" They stare. "We actually never met," says Jack. Aeryn orders John to search Jack, again in her alien language from our perspective, and John refuses her once, then again. Aeryn gets huffy and keeps her gun leveled at Jack. "Is she ever gonna put that down?" asks Jack. But remember, she can understand what he's saying -- the only one without translator microbes, including us, is Jack. That's important. She shakes her head, grinning like steel. John's like, "Uh, doubt it." Jack assures them, still staring at Aeryn, that Wilson has no idea any of them is there: "It's not gonna take them long to start searching places we've been before." John asks if Jack talked to any of his contacts, and Jack goes quiet: "Everybody. No one's gonna help us, son. It's too dangerous." John asks if Jack will help, himself, and Jack shrugs: "I don't matter in this. Official word is that these aliens never existed. D'Argo's on his way to a military base in Utah, and the warehouse has been swept clean." Aeryn advances, speaking angrily, and John grabs her wrist: "Aeryn! Back off. Please."

Jack is now kind of freaked. "Listen," he says, handing John a bunch of cash, "the two of you have to get out of town, and you've got to find someplace that's safe. I'll hold them off here as long as I can." John protests that his dad shouldn't have to cover for him, but Jack's convinced that this is the only play: "You're in this too deep. They're not going to just let you walk away. Look, at least this time I get to say goodbye." Aeryn looks down, away, with respect, but also perhaps remembering her own parents' goodbye. She has no idea how bad that particular storyline will get. John: "I will...um...we'll hole up somewhere and I'll...uh...I'll contact you." Jack demurs and says that they'll "make him tell" if he knows anything. John says goodbye, and Jack nods. As they exit, Aeryn stops before Jack. She speaks to him in an alien language that we can't understand, kindly, holding his gaze, and turns to leave. This is not the last time Aeryn and Jack will touch, without us getting to know the entire story, any more than we can ever hope to understand how much our parents influence the people we love, and the way that we love them. I could do ten pages here on the way that Aeryn continually disappoints and tempts John to hope the same way Jack always did, and vice versa with her piece-of-shit parents and John's constant leaving, but it's not germane except to note: Aeryn and Jack have more in common than either of them do with John, and we can't see it all, ever, because that's not the kind of thing you understand with your brain. Close-up on Aeryn's face as Jack speaks: "Thank you, Aeryn Sun." (Transcendent symbolic moment in the family drama, or yet another clue to the puzzle of the episode? You decide. Either way, they understand each other. Either way, John's completely fucking clueless as usual. He's such a Joxer, just all "yoo-be-doo-be-doo, la la la" all the time. I like *The Simpsons*, but I never really felt like I understood it -- or John -- until I realized how many men automatically understand that it's more about Homer than anybody else -- the "I'm just an ignorant shmoe" card men play without even thinking about it. And once you get the reality of that, you can have any boy. *Any boy in the whole school.*) Aeryn stops short, looks at Jack, and then steps up as he looks away. She stares at him a moment, and then exits, leaving Jack alone, scared for both of them. We won't see him again. All we have is love, now.

-- Page 18 --

John and Aeryn walk through the city, Aeryn wondering why everybody's staring at her. "They think you look good," says John, but I don't know how this is anything other than a placatory nothing, because if anything they're seeing *how good she could look*. The girl from the beach walks past them, and John turns to stare, and Aeryn wonders why. "That girl," says John. The girl turns back to look at them. "She was on the beach the other day, when I crash-landed," John explains. "That one." Aeryn's not feeling this particular paranoia, considering that they have an actual global alliance of governments on their asses. "[So] I think I know her. I think...we went to high school together? It was only for a couple of weeks, we never talked, but..." Aeryn giggles, but not in a funny way; more like how every episode somebody goes completely nuts and Aeryn's used to it. "Yeah, yeah, she looks familiar." She smiles at John, because you don't feed the beast of John being crazy, ever, or else you get Season 3. Best to just ignore it and laugh it off. The cameras whirl, adding an edge to the overall dreamy quality, as John starts going through the stacks of magazines at a newsstand, tossing aside magazine after magazine. "They're all seven months old. Why are they all



seven months old?" Aeryn, worried now, keeps dipping into the shot, getting between John and whoever he's yelling at all crazy. It's very disorienting, because people on TV don't just jump in front of the camera like that normally. Quite inventive. "John, stop it," she tells him. He screams that he's seen all the magazines and shit from before, because they're from when he left, and Aeryn is getting scared that he's going to throw the whole "sneaky" part of their plan. He starts yelling at the newsstand guy, who is the Speedo gentleman from earlier: "I used to ride my bike past your house, in the fifth grade!" People are staring; Aeryn cannot deal. The guy -- who has an Australian accent, which I can see them giving him -- protests, but John starts yelling at Aeryn: "Everybody here, Aeryn. I know them all. I know Wilson, I know Cobb, I know you!" Not really getting the full implication -- and I must admit that, sitting down to review this episode, I couldn't even remember if she was real or not -- she just keeps trying to calm him down. John pulls a gun from his bag and tells Aeryn to get lost: "Get away from me, Aeryn! Get away! Back off! Every place I've been, I've been there before. Every. Place." He turns to a random guy nearby. "Greg Kukonus! I dated your sister!" John does an awesome Buffy move, jumping onto a nearby concrete wall and speeding off, down, away. Away from Aeryn. We won't see her again. All we have is John, now. He's ready for the test. He knows it. It's a fairy tale.

-- Page 19 --

John storms into a pool hall, staring around at everyone doing nothing in particular. "Yeah! Here we go!" He laughs in that crazy way he laughs in every single episode, because in every single episode, there will be a point at which John goes insane and starts laughing. Frankly, I'm proud he held on this long. "This is exactly the way I remember it! I know all you guys, don't I?" He nods to his own crazy ass. "It's a little out of context," he mumbles, drawing his gun on a random guy to the side, behind whom a girl is hiding. "...But I know you." He walks over to a table, picks up a mug of beer, starts with the Crichton bravado. "How the hell you been?" He drinks from the beer and then jacks an old lady's cigarette and snuffs it out. "Quit." He strides around, in the chest-out pose we'll know so well by the end of the series. "And what the hell are you doin' here? Yeah, I've been here." He strides to the men's washroom, throws the door open. "Been in there." The music and camera go wonky as the men inside stare at him. "Nothin' new." He turns to leave the pool hall, crazy as a Junebug, but stops short. Close-up on his eyes: "But I've never been in there." He turns toward the Ladies, strides over crazily, kicks it open. He is greeted by a wall of orange light. His WTF face is matched only by our own.

There's a story-parable by somebody -- Guattari? De Saussure? Derrida himself? Google fails me, so it's probably Lacan, because you know his dead ass is just *too good* for common Google -- in which a boy and a girl are sitting on a train which, when it pulls up to the platform, occasions the girl to ask which station they are at. The boy looks out the window at the restrooms, and states very matter-of-factly, "We're at WOMEN." Because, you see, he's misinterpreted the bathroom sign for the station name. "Don't be silly," says the girl, who has apprised herself of her own window view. "We're sitting at MEN." The point of the "joke" -- which isn't really a joke, because old dead European white male literary theorists don't really joke in the way that you and I think of "jokes" -- is that you're already caught in the linguistics of your experience. You think you know what it is, for example, to be a boy, and it's a natural tendency to

view all "other" as the most simple "other" possible, and get caught up in the myth of that, rather than looking at the forest instead of the trees. But combine that with the wormhole stuff, and you're really cooking. *Of course* John's never been in the Women's room -- that's the point of the episode. But now that he's jumped in the wormhole -- the literal one, days ago, alone, and the metaphorical one last night, with Aeryn -- he can go there. He can open the door, and explore the wonders he hasn't yet seen. Talk about Rabelais, try "Women's *Pissoir* As Holy Grail." That's hot, and just as filthy as anything else that happens on this show. Sure, I feel like an idiot 'Scaper loving this show; it's got Muppets, who wouldn't? But the difference between forcing yourself to read *Ulysses* and watching this show is the difference between hitting yourself in the head with something heavy, and watching people who are *entirely too hot* blowing shit up and making out. No fucking contest, Joyce. Sorry. Point being: having lost everything, John can now look out at this fairy tale from the outside, and realize how well he's been tricked, by whatever force is guiding this particular quest. How his homesickness, now processed, now outside his heart, is something to be looked at, instead of something to be coveted and kissed and cried over. John has his life back. His bravery has earned him that.

-- Page 20 --

Cut to John storming toward the facility hangar as Wilson pulls a gun. "Just stop!" John tells him. John's not having it, as the vans pull up and soldiers jump out, and he's just laughing, on top of it all, no doubt now, no fear. "Make me. You're not gonna shoot. You're not even Wilson." The thing with John and Aeryn is that he's the intuitive one, the dreamer, and she's the warrior, the hard one. She couldn't have figured this out any more than he could have been the one to escape and knock that first guard out. Without sacrificing John's masculinity, or Aeryn's femininity. (If this were *The Apprentice* I'd give you a quiz: compare and contrast with, say, Laura and Bill from *Battlestar*: the intuitive male dove warrior, the hardcore female hawk civilian.) Wilson: "Where's the female alien?" But John's so over the whole thing that he barely spares a glance. "I'm going to talk to the man in charge, and we both know it ain't you." Ben Browder's that boring kind of hot that never stops being hot, but never stops being so obvious that you don't need to mention it; nevertheless, Crichton's *most* beautiful when he knows he's right, without a slip of doubt. God knows it happens rarely enough, due to him being a fuckup.

John comes upon Jack, who sits alone in a chair, in the middle of an empty hangar. They are quiet with each other for a moment. "Who are you?" asks John. The question he's been asking since he was five; the question without an answer except for what his newly sci-fi life might provide. "You did well, John," says Jack, not looking up. "Most species don't do as well." John asks what the whole world really is, in this dream. "Everything here is a physical creation from your memory," Jack says, and John responds that Jack's not real. "Well," he says, and looks up. He's not totally proud of the shit he has been perpetrating. "I'm not your father." It's telling that John has processed that -- what's less surprising than another disappointment? -- and goes right to "And what about my friends?" Jack, to an increasingly close-to-freakout John, says, "They were investigating the wormhole we'd created from your memory, so we decided to use them in our trial." D'Argo and Rygel appear in glass compartments off to the side. "Crichton, enough is enough," says D'Argo, who's in no mood. "Get us

back home." John's so relieved that Rygel is still alive, but of course, since this is the real Rygel, he couldn't care less about all the John-related bullshit: "Kill me? These people treated me splendidly!" Jack looks at John, hoping he'll chill out. See? "They gave me marjools, Crichton! Lovely Hynerian marjools! Mmmm!" Fucking Rygel. He slurps down some kind of disgusting spiny snails. "Whoever you are, I thank you!"

-- Page 21 --

"Of course we didn't kill him," says Jack, like this wasn't cruel enough either way. "We created his corpse." John's hair is now totally fucked up, as Strega would want me to point out; he looks like a little kid. "Why? Why would you make me think that he was dead?" Jack stands: "We needed a human reaction, John. *Your* reaction." John grabs him by the shirt and throws him up against a pillar. "You made me think you were my father!" he screams. There it is. The last lie. A chunk of Jack comes off in John's hands, revealing some kind of gross alien shit. John drops the chunk, totally in shock, looking at his hands. This is where he loses Jack. We won't really see him again, unless we see him for real. "I'm sorry. For the trial to have value, you had to believe everything. Let me show you." Jack steps away, and John gives in to the craziness of all this. "Are we anywhere *near* Earth?" he asks. "Actually, we're not far from Moya. We brought you here to recreate your memory." John's all caught up. "Well, if you can make all this, why not just make a wormhole to take you to Earth?" Jack shakes his head: "That would use all our remaining power. We only have enough left to transport our race one last time. We had to be certain of how we would be received." Any other show, this wouldn't matter: aliens kidnap main character, fuck with him, lie to him, realize that Earth isn't ready for their jelly, let him go. But because this show is awesome, it's actually the beginning of the entire quest. Jack walks through yet another in a series of meaningful doorways, and John follows after. Have you ever seen *The Truman Show*? The ending always makes me cry. Something about that door, out into the world, and the man at the edge of the sky, stepping out, into the next level of the game, the one that matters. It's too big.

Jack and John enter a large room, the lights dimming and brightening. Several odd sacs hang from the ceiling. As John looks up, one of them opens its eyes. We cut and fade from lots of angles, this side and that side, one alien and then another, John upside down. Their lovely eyes. "Though space is without boundaries," Jack intones, "there are but a few planets where we can live." John assumes, given what he's seen in the last fifteen episodes, that they're looking to take over. "Not take over," says Jack. "Cohabitate. To replenish our hive. The Ancients have stories of a world that will welcome us. We can only hope they're true. You can move closer." John's fucking cool where he is, thanks. "We had to find out whether humans would welcome us, or fight us." Images of John's life float across the screen, the walls, his face. It's very wack. It's worth noting that Browder came to utter hotness fairly recently. "You stole my memories," he complains. "I'm sorry to have taken this form," says Jack. "But I thought the best spy would be a father, as seen through his son's eyes." And he's right, especially with this particular son. Throughout the rest of the series, John will always love this Ancient; not as a father, but as a thing that knows him, knows his heart. The only thing he really wants. "You stole my memories," he says again, and Jack protests that they had no choice.

-- Page 22 --

"Show me," says John. The first and last question. "What you really look like." Jack nods, and crosses to the side -- John walks away, around, keeping the chrysalises between him and the real deal. A bright light shines down from above as John blinks. The most important thing in the entire series happens right this second, but we don't know it yet, and we won't know it for a long time. A veil has been broken. Once you've taken the plunge, jumped into wormholes, you have knowledge of wormholes. Maybe not in a place you can put into words, maybe not in a way you can explain to Steve Carell, or even Steve Dedalus, but it's there. And you can't know what your father really looks like, underneath all the memories and lies and disappointments, until that day. Just because it happens every day, to every person, doesn't make the jump any less momentous, or any less terrifying. Other people's bodies are the scariest thing in the world until you've done it before. A sillier man than John might think of it as "conquering," as "exploring," but either way it's learning territory. It's moving out into the mystery, it's crossing the boundary from what's known to what isn't. Which is what astronauts do, as like, their whole job. This is a boy story; this is a boy's fairy tale, so it's about astronauts and wormholes and guns and the whole bag of boy bullshit. But it's still true, no matter your circumstance.

The light fades, and the Ancient is revealed. Doesn't really matter what it looks like, because this is a crappy, scrappy sci-fi show, but it's about the same height as a man, kind of like a bug, kind of like a rabbit. Kind of like a lowly crustacean. "Many of us hope that Earth might be our welcoming place. If all people were like you, maybe it could be. But they're not. In your memory, we saw millions of Wilsons, and Cobbs. It also lead us to a familiar conclusion. The highest life form on the planet is also the most destructive. And your humans would kill us." John looks up a moment into an Ancient's eyes, into the fading light there. "So what will you do now?" he asks. "What we've done since before I was hatched," says the Ancient. "We continue searching for a home." John turns to leave, still smarting: "So will I." The Ancient calls him back, offering the ring and chain, already a fetish to the father, now a symbol of so much more. Of the puzzle of everything. "Thanks," says John, and takes it. He opens the door, the ocean roars. "Maybe we'll meet again one day, John," says Ancient Jack, and we freeze, right back at *The Truman Show*, a boy who has become a man, caught on the edge of whatever the hell comes next, John limned by ocean, standing in the shadow of that last doorway into the real story, which is just now beginning. "Maybe." But you and I both know this shit was a cakewalk compared to what will happen then.

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## - Lewis Carroll Never Imagined This -

-- Page 1 --

The crew is sitting around, eating and bitching. It's nice to know that as alien as most of them are, they can still do things I can relate to. D'Argo says he's getting off *Moya* as soon as possible, and I know he's going to state his reasons soon, but the incredibly unappetizing-looking potluck dinner in front of them can't be making him want to stick around. Crichton wants the crew to stay together, but Zhaan tells him they're under no obligation to function as a unit. Strange coming from the woman [who](#)

owes her life to sharing *Unity* with Crichton, but I don't feel like I have to say much about the more unflattering parts of Zhaan's nature, given that Jacob's already done a lot of heavy lifting on that front. No one's too thrilled with the food except, predictably enough, for Rygel, and then Aeryn chimes in that she won't abandon *Moya*. I think we're hearing Aeryn's loyal nature talking, although *Pilot's DNA* could certainly be adding to the volume. D'Argo snits that Aeryn's got nowhere to go anyway, and starting in on Aeryn in the first minute of the episode isn't the recommended course of action if you want me to like you this week, Tentacle Face. Zhaan professes her consternation at agreeing with D'Argo, and if she's so upset about it, I can only imagine that she really suffered when she lined up with him about *cutting off Pilot's arm*. She hid it well, though. Zhaan's point, however, is that if *Moya* has gotten to the point where she's no longer able to starburst, they're all at risk. Chiana asks if she can say something, but the answer is loudly and uniformly negative. That'll make participating in their book group difficult. (Hee, is that an image or what?) D'Argo says he wants to see his son, which makes exactly one of us in the entire galaxy, and then Rygel gives a long-winded speech, the point of which is to ask if they can trade *Moya* for a faster vessel. Aeryn grabs Rygel by the throat and snarls, "*Moya* is not a possession, your Lowness!" Hee. And if you are one of those that yells, "Hands on the puppet!" every time someone grabs Rygel, I have to warn you that your voice will be getting quite the workout this episode. D'Argo rumbles, "If you ignore the messenger, which is effortless, the message is sound." Heh. Crichton keeps defending *Moya*, and everyone rounds on him, even Aeryn, who thinks he only wants to stay around the Uncharted Territories so he can find a wormhole and go home. Chiana tries to cut in and is rebuffed again, but then Pilot appears on a mini-Clamshell Cam, and Chiana says she was trying to tell them that the DRDs could hear their conversation. Damn, that could be inconvenient. I hope if anyone on the ship manages to get lucky, they remember to check under the bed first. Pilot tells them that he and *Moya* understand their concerns, as always, and tells them to prepare for immediate starburst. Zhaan nervously says she thought that was impossible for another fifty arms, but Pilot says that while *Moya's* energy is low, she wishes to prove to the crew that she's still capable of protecting them. Over Zhaan's ineffective protests, they get going. In starburst, everyone hangs on except D'Argo, who casually keeps eating. He compliments one of the dishes as clearly the best, with which Rygel concurs, and we learn that Aeryn made it. Aw. The thought of Aeryn cooking is about the cutest thing I could possibly imagine. Don't tell her that, though -- I'm still kind of attached to being alive. Suddenly, *Moya* appears to hit something, and everyone goes flying. Crichton sits up and frankly looks terrified as we veer into the opening credits.

-- Page 2 --

When we return, Crichton gets to his feet and immediately (of course, and also, aw, although she'd probably kick his ass if she noticed) goes to check on Aeryn, who opines that they must have hit something. Crichton wonders how that could have been possible in starburst. Chiana helps Zhaan to her feet, and Zhaan winces as she says the "fibers" in her arm are torn. Hmm. Before we can really get down to the pulp of that statement, however, Aeryn asks Pilot what's going on. But Pilot's image is no longer there, and neither, for that matter, is Rygel. The remaining crew then notices a bright light outside, and then D'Argo rushes off to check Command, but before he can

get very far, he's suddenly bathed in some eerie red light, and quickly gets sucked into some sort of vortex and disappears. Zhaan whines that D'Argo can't just disappear like that. Looks like the Goddess has abandoned someone in her hour of need. I can't imagine why. Aeryn then heads off to try to reach Pilot, but just as quickly gets sucked into another vortex, although the light surrounding her before she disappears is blue instead of red. Zhaan panickedly looks to Crichton for an explanation, while Chiana chimes in that she doesn't want to die. From what I've heard about fan reaction to the introduction of her character, the writers really shouldn't have set viewers up like that. Crichton, for his part, gets that fear-based catatonic look on his face again, which I doubt Zhaan or Chiana finds very reassuring.

Cut to Crichton rushing into Command, through the viewscreen of which we can see the same bright white light. Pilot's image is on the Clamshell Cam, and they catch each other up: Pilot doesn't know anything other than most of *Moya's* systems are out, and Crichton tells him the readings from Command are all over the map. Also, *Moya* is "frightened, and in great pain." Yes, I've heard that being drawn and quartered may produce those feelings. Pilot manages to get a read on Rygel's and Aeryn's whereabouts, and Crichton rushes off to try to find them.

Zhaan is using her one good arm to try to keep Chiana from taking a transport and leaving. Crichton appears, informs them that the comms don't work, and tells them that Pilot's scared, so Zhaan heads off to his chamber. I'll tell you now that we're not going to get to see the scene wherein Pilot looks at Zhaan all "Hurt arm? Yeah, I know what *that's* like." And that is a crying shame. Crichton tasks Chiana with finding Rygel, and, at her reluctance, asks if she wants to be part of the crew. Chiana: "On your good days." Heh. Crichton counters that this *is* one of the good days, and if Chiana's skeptical of this claim, it's because she hasn't met [Maldis](#) yet. Anyway, Crichton tells Chiana that she's not going anywhere because Pilot can't get the outer doors open, and then reassures her that everything's going to be okay because "Pilot's on the job." Chiana takes a long pause, and given that said pause gives the viewers a chance to absorb how hopelessly contradictory those statements are, it might not have been the most advisable dramatic choice. Regardless, Chiana takes off to Tier Eight try to find Rygel.

-- Page 3 --

Crichton arrives at the maintenance bay, which is where Pilot told him Aeryn was. I'll shorten up the recap by a lot if I just say that if you're into lots of dialogue-free shots of Crichton running around by himself, you'll like this episode a lot. You'll also find it a lot easier to recap, and that may not be all that relevant to you, but what the hell, I'm in a sharing mood. Anyway, Crichton gets sucked into a red vortex...

...and when he lands, we quickly gather that the light is hurting his eyes something fierce. He staggers around for a while with one hand over his eyes, and eventually falls to his knees and vomits. It's a good thing he's from the South, because he's got enough new experiences to deal with at the moment as it is. We get lots of double-exposure and shaky camera work to emphasize the point, which is all very artsy, but the dude just booted, you know? We get it.

Sometime later, Crichton has found something to tie around his eyes. I am saddened to have to report that said something is not his shirt. He's at Pilot's chamber, but Pilot is nowhere to be found.



Sometime later, in the same dimension, D'Argo is staggering around, similarly affected. The point is driven home again by the camerawork and visual effects, and if you really want to see someone with lots of facial hair and tentacles, a double-exposed D'Argo should fit the bill quite nicely. Crichton staggers into the frame behind D'Argo, and D'Argo calls his name, but Crichton appears not to hear him and disappears the other way again. D'Argo, now just about incapacitated due, presumably, to the greater amount of time he's been in this dimension, falls to the floor murmuring Crichton's name again. Isn't that more enjoyable than him calling for Jothee?

Crichton's now made it to Command. He hears an alien-sounding wailing coming from above him, so he hoists himself up for a look...

...and now he's in the blue dimension, which boasts an ongoing shrill noise that causes Crichton to cover his ears in pain. This is what can happen if you don't perform regular tests of the emergency broadcast system. After running around for awhile, Crichton finds Aeryn. He demonstrates his unconscious desire to make the Darwin awards by tapping the Peacekeeper on the shoulder, but luckily for all of us, Aeryn's reflexes are equal to the task of not shooting him in his pretty, pretty face. They try to talk, but that proves impossible over the din, so they have a charades conversation that's far more amusing than it has any right to be. Crichton's Rygel is particularly hilarious, and it makes me wonder how much money would be saved in the entertainment industry each year if there were no takes ruined by actors cracking each other up. Anyway, Crichton leads Aeryn to the spot through which he left the last dimension, but it doesn't happen to be a portal here, so he's left looking flummoxed as Aeryn has no trouble giving a wordless "That was interesting, genius" through a sarcastic thumbs-up. They decide to go look for D'Argo and Rygel...

-- Page 4 --

... and elsewhere, they split up down two corridors. As soon as they have, though, some slashes appear in the air behind Crichton, and if he didn't have enough problems already, it looks like Freddy Krueger's after him. Of course, if Krueger gets a look at Pilot and Rygel, he might decide that this reality is too fucked-up even for him. Aeryn returns, and after an aborted attempt to determine whether she saw the scratches in the air, they walk off, with more scratches appearing in the air behind them.

Sometime later, they split up again, and Crichton investigates Rygel's quarters. We see Rygel's self-portrait, which is pretty funny, but brings up the question: If there are copies of everything on *Moya* in each dimension, why aren't there copies of each crew member as well? (I don't really want to know -- I'm just giving you a topic. Talk amongst yourselves.) Anyway, Crichton reaches for his tape recorder, although of all the possessions of Crichton that Rygel could have ganked, it seems like the one that contains "Letters To My Dad On Tape Never Sent" is an odd choice. It just so happens, though, that in reaching for the recorder, Crichton gets sucked into another dimension, leaving Aeryn to discover he's gone. She warily draws her weapon. After the break, Crichton reappears in a yellow-lighted dimension, and this time the occupant of the quarters is there, as Rygel looks up and starts belly-laughing to the point of wheezing. I'd be happy to see Crichton too -- who wouldn't? -- but this still seems a little extreme. Rygel goes on that Crichton is making even less sense than

usual, "but in a cute way." All right, he's winning me over here. Crichton says he doesn't know what Rygel's been smoking, and I have to admit that that's the first place my mind went as well. Soon, however, Crichton is struggling to stave off the giggles as well.

Cut to Crichton listening as Rygel's *in medias Catskillas Routines*. Crichton guffaws at the punchline, but then tries to regain control in between bouts of cracking up. He tells Rygel that something's wrong, and points out that Rygel doesn't tell jokes. Rygel, hilariously lugubriously, agrees, and then they're dying laughing again, this time with good reason, because the delivery there was awesome. The party keeps going until Freddy Krueger shows up again, and even Rygel doesn't see the humor in that...

...but later, he's trying to tell Crichton that it was a hallucination. Crichton spends more time refuting that statement than it deserves, which is to say any, and then tells Rygel that they need to locate a weird noise to find the dimensional portal. Rygel: "Weird noise. Does my stomach count?" Crichton giggles, but enough stuff has disappeared into Rygel's gullet over the years that maybe he should take that suggestion a little more seriously. In an effort to stop Rygel from cracking him up, Crichton tries holding Rygel's lips together -- see what I mean? -- but that only serves to make him funnier, so Crichton takes his leave of Rygel.

-- Page 5 --

Sometime later, Crichton hears the noise, so he enters a Jeffries tube equivalent or whatever and, after paraphrasing the episode title, gigglingly slides down the tube and vanishes.

Back in the original dimension, Zhaan and Chiana enter Command, and Zhaan snits that they can't find the others. "False information yet again." Someone's in a mood -- better fire up the sunlamp, please. Pilot reports that the DRDs are still reporting on the rest of the crew's whereabouts, which doesn't make any sense to me, but I'll agree with Pilot when he says, "Your inability to locate them does not negate the fact that they are there." Said agreement is based less on science and more on general principles concerning this group's competence. Crichton thankfully appears to put an end to the bitchery and asks Pilot what he knows about "parallel realities. Temporal shifts. Two objects occupying the same space at the same time." It's a good thing for me that we haven't recapped every *Star Trek* series, because if we had, every single word in that last sentence would have been hyperlinked to something. Crichton clarifies that there are at least three other *Moyas* existing in the same place, so Pilot asks him if he's familiar with the mathematical hypothesis "dimensional schism. Light and sound disjointed into base elements." That explains the properties of the first two dimensions but not so much the third, unless THC is a component of either light or sound. He goes on that starburst "is technically the seam between space-time dimensions." Well, sure, if you want to get all technical about it. He goes on that *Moya's* power cells allow them access, and they ride the energy stream until they're pushed out at random. Chiana wonders what the hell kind of way that is to get around, which seems like the fairest question anyone's asked in a while, but Pilot icily invites her to leave at the next available opportunity. But seriously, no wonder [it took them three months to find Crichton](#). Anyway, the point is that *Moya* went into starburst without adequate thrust, which resulted in them getting stuck. Crichton disbelievingly asks if they're still in starburst, and when Pilot starts to babble about "insertion thetas,"

snaps "Screw the science lesson!" It's heartening that Crichton keeps giving me new reasons to love him. I mean, he could easily rest on his more obvious assets. Crichton asks what they're stuck in. Pilot stammers, "Whatever's on the other side."

-- Page 6 --

After a very cool-looking shot of the four *Moyas* on top of each other, Chiana's nervously babbling about the "creature" Crichton ran across, although from what we saw on screen, it seems like he's getting a little ahead of himself. Zhaan, briefly enough that it doesn't cause an eye-roll, talks about having wondered what was beyond time and space in the context of spirituality, and then Chiana butts in to ask what they're going to do. Crichton instructs them to get hold of some weapons in case the creature returns, and then heads off to Pilot's chamber...

...wherein Pilot is instructing him in the proper sequence to achieve full reverse. Crichton then asks why *Moya* has been schismed and not them, and is told that it's a matter of relative density -- the heavier the object, the greater the fissure. That still doesn't really answer why things that aren't actually part of *Moya* -- Rygel's painting, furniture, etc. -- should be duplicated, but at least they're trying. Crichton asks what happens when the sections get pulled apart. Pilot: "Molecular diaspora." That's probably less fun than it sounds. Crichton goes to stand next to Pilot as he tells him that *Moya* didn't have to go into starburst until she was ready. The ensuing scene is meant to be touching, and it achieves that to some degree, but I have to point out that the gravity is compromised to some degree by the fact that Ben Browder has to keep ducking to his right to avoid being clocked in the noggin by Pilot's enormous helmet head. Heh. Pilot mistakenly takes Crichton's statement as a recrimination, but Crichton disabuses him of that notion, and puts a hand on Pilot's shoulder as he asks how *Moya*'s doing. Pilot's accent goes hyper-Aussie as he says that she's scared. Crichton tells him they'll do what they can. Pilot: "She knows." Aw. Damn you, affecting Muppets and bio-mechanoids!

Chiana and Zhaan are weaponed up, Crichton joins them, and they all walk down the corridor, just a slo-mo away from being the opening credits of *Angel*. However, a variation soon occurs in that the slashes in the air appear, causing our heroes to hit the deck. We get a creature POV as it approaches Crichton, so apparently his hotness is dimensionally as well as galactically transcendent. Crichton gets that "Oh, shit" look on his face for the third time as we go into the break.

When we return, the three of them arrive at the maintenance bay, but Crichton instructs Zhaan to go to Pilot's chamber to protect him, and to shoot the creature should it reappear. Zhaan: "Even if I was [*sic*] still a full Pa'u, I wouldn't hesitate." So spirituality's just another thing she's willing to kill. Crichton calls Chiana "Pip," and then throws Chiana into the vortex and follows...

-- Page 7 --

...and then they're in the red dimension, wherein Chiana is delighted (oof, sorry) to discover that the light has no effect on her. D'Argo shows up with some goggles on his face, and declares that the light affects thinking and motor functions. Chiana has to pipe up again that it doesn't affect her, but with only two more weird dimensions to visit, I can't imagine that her gloating could possibly come back to bite her in the ass. Crichton fills D'Argo in on their situation, and D'Argo's never heard of anything like this happening before. Chiana, however, has -- her people's weapons scientists once

poked a hole into another dimension, and it widened past the point they could control it, causing four populated planets to dissolve into tiny chunks. This would seem a lot more tragic if I hadn't been [so recently introduced to Chiana's people](#). Now it just seems like the universe balancing itself out. Crichton tells them that they need to start the engines in each of *Moya's* incarnations, and he has the codes necessary to do that. Just then, though, the creature shows up, they shoot at it, and it goes away. Chiana breathes that they did it, and D'Argo growls, "It does not feel like a victory." Thanks for the input, Mr. Worf.

In Pilot's chamber, Crichton has just finished giving D'Argo the codes, and this just seems like it has the potential to devolve into a variation of Telephone, with somewhat less hilarious results than usual. D'Argo and Crichton argue over who's going to stay, and D'Argo points out that perhaps Chiana is the logical choice, particularly if they want to keep the floors clean. However, Chiana flatly refuses to stay alone, so D'Argo tells the two of them to get out of there. Crichton says to wait half an arm and then enter the sequence, and D'Argo snarks that he remembers from the first seven times Crichton told him. Also funny: Crichton making to retch again, and D'Argo yelling, "Not here!" Hee. There's a good amount of filler in this episode, but the dialogue is extremely crisp and amusing to make up for it, I have to say. Regardless of D'Argo's warning, Crichton does puke, and D'Argo's all, "Ooooo." Again, hee.

Crichton and Chiana are at the next vortex, and Chiana's all worried about what she should do if the creature's there. Crichton suggests she piss it off, and she asks how. Crichton: "Pretend it's me." Geez, and he was supposed to be the one that was going to be easy to get along with. Also, hee. He helps Chiana through and then hoists himself up...

-- Page 8 --

...and in the blue dimension, Crichton finds Chiana writhing in pain from the sound. It's too bad she can't hear, because this would be the perfect time for Crichton to smug, "Doesn't affect me! Doesn't affect me!" Crichton, though, being the best person in the history of forever, does the only thing he can do, which is to throw Chiana over his shoulders, run to Rygel's quarters, and toss her into the next dimension. Along the way he does notice that the light seems to have consumed some of the ship. Once Chiana's gone, Crichton goes in search of Aeryn, but the creature shows up and slashes three marks into Aeryn's prowler. Crichton's looking at them quizzically when Aeryn appears and shoots at the creature, causing it to withdraw. Once she comes closer, we see that she's wearing a headset, and she beckons Crichton to follow her and then gives him one. Once he has it on, the noise stops. Crichton calls her a genius, and, enjoying the moment a bit, she says she modified her flight headsets to block out acoustic wavelengths. All that, and she can cook too. Crichton endearingly, if unnecessarily given that we've been here many times before, calls attention to her technical accomplishment, and she snaps, "Well, it's military tech. It's battle-tested." Hee. She asks why he didn't shoot at the creature, and Crichton confesses that he doesn't know. I think we're meant to infer that the creature touched Crichton's mind earlier, but that's left unclear. Crichton explains about the dimensional schism and where everyone is, and then gets to the part where the engines have to be turned on in all the realities. Aeryn: "That should have been the first thing you told me, Crichton." She's not wrong. She tells Crichton to scoot, as she knows the codes thanks to Pilot's

DNA, but he stubbornly refuses to believe her until she recites the entire sequence to him. Unnecessary, but cute and amusing, and therefore rather fitting for this episode. Crichton notes, "It's gonna be harder to doubt you in the future." And therefore, in the future, you'll have caught up to the rest of us. He tells Aeryn to give him half an arm, which seems wrong given that D'Argo's half an arm must have started at least ten minutes ago, but it's not like this part of the plan is going to come to fruition anyway. Crichton does observe some more slashes that the creature left behind.

Crichton emerges in the yellow dimension, but Pip and Sparky aren't around. Crichton runs off, again seeing that the light is encroaching on a lot more of the ship. He finds Chiana and Rygel in Pilot's chamber, and gets to work as Chiana asks him if he knows any good jokes. Crichton: "Not besides the one I'm living." Oh, the irony that no one laughed at that one. Crichton refers to Rygel as Napoleon, and I could claim that [he totally stole my joke](#) if I were to ignore the laws of time and space. Recapping this show does have its conveniences. Realizing that getting Chiana or Rygel to remember and execute the sequence is more of an exercise in futility than even he's willing to undertake, he starts the engines himself and gives Chiana a simple instruction of what to do should they shut down. If starting all the engines at the same time isn't necessary, I don't know why he's having D'Argo and Aeryn wait around in their respective dimensions, unless he's read ahead in the script -- I mean, "wants to make sure that nothing goes wrong." Rygel sings a giggle-worthy song that he apparently made up on the spot, and I have to admit that hanging out in this nitrous oxide-y dimension with Rygel and Chiana wouldn't be the worst time I've had this week.

-- Page 9 --

Crichton gigglingly returns to the normal dimension to find Zhaan leveling her gun at him. Surprisingly, she manages to hold her fire, and she tells him that Pilot is reporting full reverse power, so...half an arm has passed since he left Aeryn? Do I really care about timeline issues at this point? Crichton notes that Zhaan has her vestments on, and she says that she hasn't forsaken the priesthood in her soul. This smells like bullshit to me. I mean, when you do the things that Zhaan has done, laying down your robes has "You can't fire me, I quit!" written all over it. Zhaan's point, however, is that she thinks they may die soon, and given that the light is eating *Moya* faster than Rygel eats...well, anything, she's got a fair point here. They head to Command, where Pilot tells them that despite *Moya*'s best efforts, they're still being dragged in. He suggests a long shot: "*Moya* could -- willingly -- lose the baby." Just the fact that he can even suggest that is heartbreaking on so many levels, and it's not made any less so even though I know the baby is going to be Talyn. Whatever else I may say about Zhaan, she gets some lasting credit for denying Pilot's suggestion as firmly as Crichton does. Pilot presses the issue, making the valid point that if they don't get out of the situation, the baby will die anyway, but Crichton stands firm, and really, who wouldn't? I mean, we all hope that we're good enough that we'd rather die than live under such a bargain, and I kind of love that it's the unity of Crichton and Zhaan that underscores that, although Crichton's a lot louder about it since, frankly, he's better. Anyway, the creature appears to take our minds off moral dilemmas for the moment, and Pilot begs them to shoot it, as "*Moya* is very scared." Not that I exactly blame you, but you don't seem like bravery incarnate either, Helmet Head. Zhaan's got the gun trained on the

creature, but Crichton tells her not to shoot, and she heeds him. He observes that the creature has left seven slashes, and has a moment of realization as he breathes, "Prime numbers." If you're confused, you're in good company, as Zhaan's "The HELL?" expression could rival that of anyone else's in her dimension or any other. Once Crichton points out that all the scratches are grouped in prime numbers, she cottons on that the creature is trying to communicate. Crichton: "This isn't an attack, Zhaan. It's an invitation." So, Crichton, the next time I want to get close enough to someone to stab him, I should just hold up three fingers? I mean, not that I'm not willing to try.

-- Page 10 --

When we're back from the break, Crichton ignores Zhaan's practical and Pilot's fear-based objections, and enters the light the creature is giving off. He soon finds himself in conversation with something resembling a giant squid, and I hope for the sake of interspecies unity that it hasn't delved so deeply into Crichton's mind to see [how much he likes calamari](#). The creature, in a female voice, informs him that his "container" has breached her kind's existence, and there can be no overlap. Accordingly, it's her job to destroy anything that's caught in between, and furthermore, backing out of the expanse will tear the rupture beyond restoration. However, were they to starburst forward on their own power, she would be able to guide them back to their own dimension. Having made her point, she unceremoniously dumps Crichton out. People around here could learn a thing or two about brevity from old Squiddy here.

In Command, Crichton tells Pilot that they have to go forward. Pilot likes that idea about as much as he likes D'Argo's Qualta blade these days, but he agrees, and tells Crichton to reverse the final four controls of the sequence he gave him earlier. Crichton instructs Pilot to give him five hundred microts and then rev up the engines, and after sharing a nice moment with Zhaan, he leaves, counting down to himself. In the red dimension, Crichton continues to count down. He eventually gets to D'Argo and promptly vomits again, and it's good that D'Argo's pretty thick-skinned, or else he might start to take that personally. He gives D'Argo the new instructions, and says to wait three hundred microts. D'Argo protests that he has no timekeeping device, so Crichton schools him in the art of counting by Mississippis. Once Crichton's gone, D'Argo starts, "One Mippippi, two Mippippi..." Like many things on this show, that's close enough.

Up, up, and away to the blue dimension. Crichton finds that his path is cut off, so he puts on the headphones. Aeryn says she was trying to get out of there, as she didn't know if he was coming back. Crichton tells her he'd never leave her, and it's a good thing there's so much filler in this episode, as we didn't just miss much by swooning there. Since he can't see her, Aeryn smiles, and then Crichton tells her they have to go forward. Unlike D'Argo and Pilot, Aeryn doesn't question this decision but simply asks for instructions, and Crichton tells her to kick the engines into forward in a hundred and fifty microts. He then asks if there's an alternate route to get to quarters. She supplies him with a suggestion, and he reminds her about the hundred and fifty microts. Aeryn: "Hundred and thirty, now. Good luck." Please don't get any more attractive to me, Aeryn. I'm confused enough as it is.

-- Page 11 --



After far too much unintentionally hilarious footage of Crichton running through the ship, he's in the yellow dimension, and down to his last fifty microts. He makes it to Pilot's chamber, where Rygel and Chiana are still having a grand old time. Crichton snarks on Rygel, who says he has a new philosophy: "What used to be important isn't, and what should be important never will be." That's a disturbingly profound statement, especially coming from a whacked-out puppet. Chiana sexily tells Crichton to relax and join in the fun, and it's an unfortunate consequence of the way my mind works that that makes me wonder exactly what she and Rygel have been up to for all this time. Anyway, Crichton kicks in the engines, and the three of them bunch up into a little sandwich. Rygel asks if he should disrobe so it's memorable, and while that's pretty hilarious, it's simultaneously tragic that it wasn't Crichton asking. We see an outside shot of the disparate *Moyas* coming together, and soon everyone's appeared in their own Pilot's chamber, and without doing so on top of each other. It might have been funny, of course, if they'd been all Reese's Peanut Butter Cup: "You got your D'Argo in my Chiana!" But there will be plenty of time for that later. Everyone laughs and laughs, except for Pilot, who sighs wearily and is all, "I fail to see the source of your amusement." I don't know if the yellow light's worn off already or what, but I would have bumped the episode up half a grade if Rygel had taken this opportunity to call Pilot a buzzkill.

The laughing continues after the break, as the crew is having another potluck dinner. D'Argo wraps up some story about how he almost got arrested for outlandishly hitting on some girl, and Chiana's regaling Zhaan with some other tale, and then asks if she should be telling her this. Zhaan: "My dear, I've kicked more ass than you've sat on." Why do I feel like there's a joke in there? Oh, right -- because there are about fifty. Everyone's all jazzed about the food, except for Crichton's biscuits, which they all good-naturedly throw at him. Pilot cuts in to ask how they all can be so cheerful after the near miss. Aeryn, taking him seriously as always, tells him they were profoundly affected by it, and asks how he and *Moya* are doing. He says they're doing great, and tells the enraptured crew that there's been a change in the status of the pregnancy -- *Moya* feels that the baby could be coming along any time now. Everyone's thrilled, and Rygel suggests she name the baby after him. Chiana snarks that that will only work if the kid's a runt, and then Crichton toasts to a healthy, happy baby. Well, he'll be half right. Zhaan kisses Rygel, over his protests, and I think everyone's touched him this episode. I only hope that doesn't prompt him actually to make good on that threat to make things memorable. We'll find out next time!

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**- NOOOOO! -**

-- Page 1 --

D'Argo's being chained up as he mutters, "I cannot believe this is happening to me again." Well, once Chiana joined the crew, it was probably only a matter of time. However, it's Zhaan doing the chaining, and she expositos that this time, it's by his own volition. D'Argo: "Barely." Cut to Pilot telling us the reason for the deception, as a Peacekeeper ship is approaching, although he's able to tell from the markings for

certain that it's not from Crais's command carrier. I certainly don't have to tell any of you that there will be plenty of time for Crais later. D'Argo growls that they could, you know, fight the Peacekeepers, but Zhaan suggests they try it Crichton's way. When she's gone, D'Argo repeats, "Crichton's way," in a tone that suggests he thinks said way is going to turn out about as well as Carlito's. It's almost like he's seen the rest of the season already.

Zhaan grunts that Rygel can't have his Thronesled if the plan is to work. She wrestles it away from him, and while Claudia Black deserves all the credit she gets in the forums for her puppet chemistry, Virginia Hey's ability to make a tug-of-war with a puppet look convincing isn't too shabby either. Also, said puppet is none too pleased. Dramatic music plays as we see someone getting into a rather hot-looking red and black leather Peacekeeper uniform. Said someone is Aeryn, who runs a hand over the PK insignia, a subtle gesture that speaks volumes. Less subtle is her hoisting of a gun so big that Godzilla would think twice about fucking with her, but that gesture too sends a certain message.

After an exterior shot of a ship hurtling toward *Moya* and seemingly leaking something as it does, Zhaan informs Pilot that they're ready, and he closes the doors to the confinement cells, which are back to housing D'Argo, Rygel, and Zhaan. Given the expressions of consternation on Zhaan and D'Argo's faces, I guess it's no wonder that no one busted out with a rendition of "The Way We Were." Rygel, though, manages to look the height of imperiousness, which is impressive for more than one obvious reason. But you know, the fact that I made an offhand joke about "[The Way We Were](#)" in an episode that mentions experiments in Leviathan control and features Aeryn's and a hot Peacekeeper's mutual attraction makes me think my unconscious is doing more work on these recaps than I realize. Thank God it's good for something other than all those nightmares from which I wake up screaming.

-- Page 2 --

The Peacekeeper ship comes in for a landing, opening-credits-style, but before it touches down, its occupants jump out and land on the floor with weapons at the ready. I'm not doing it justice, but it's a rather fake effect that still manages to look very cool. The hangar doors open, and Aeryn, enormous gun leveled, calls for them to identify themselves. A good-looking male Peacekeeper, pulse pistol trained on her, asks for her ID. The conversation does not continue, "I asked you first." "I asked you second! Two is more than one!" Of course, that's probably only because we haven't seen Crichton yet. Aeryn verbally gives her ID, and the guy says his name is "Larraq," and his assignment's none of her business. He's feeling confident since he's got several backup Peacekeepers around him. I'd still bet on Aeryn, though, and even without *The Gun That Saved Tokyo*. Larraq explains that his Marauder has a fuel leak, and it's lucky they found her. Aeryn's sardonic smile is priceless: "You think?" Seriously, dude, you have *no idea*. Larraq skeevily says it's a big ship for one little girl, and Aeryn's smile goes even harder: "I can handle big." And given that the show typically takes every possible opportunity to increase our love and lust for Crichton, who do you think would be good to cut to off that line?

Well, regardless of what you think, he's coming in, dressed in the same scorching leather outfit as Aeryn. He tells Aeryn to put down her weapon, and when she hesitates, stresses, "That is an order." Only he says so in the most atrocious English

accent I have EVER heard. I know Browder lived in London for a while, so I can only imagine he's doing this to be funny. Because if this is the best he can do, I... well, let's just say I might even start to be unimpressed by Crichton in leather, because the accent is THAT BAD. I may have to take back my statement from the last paragraph. Anyway, Larraq, not cowed by Crichton's ersatz captaincy, says that he and his team are on a "Priority Red" mission, and shows them a tag that looks like the one I use to get into the gym, only instead of a bar code, it's got a Pac-Man on it. Well, it's probably the Peacekeeper insignia, but take a look if you don't believe me. Larraq's point is, that under some provision of the Peacekeeper code, he's taking command over *Moya*, its crew, and -- he levels his pistol at Crichton -- "you." Yes, *please* take command of that accent and whip it into shape. Credits.

-- Page 3 --

When we come back to the same tableau, Crichton is all, "Oh, I think not." Dude, Henry Higgins would hear his delivery of those four words and throw up his hands all, "There's nothing I can do." But the DRDs apparently can, as several of them start a little laser crossfire that sends the Peacekeepers to the floor. When the demonstration is over, they warily get back on their feet as Crichton points out that they need his help.

Aeryn and Crichton are showing Larraq the "prisoners." Larraq notes that Zhaan is quite attractive, and even though Zhaan's probably plotting his death, [there's precedent for thinking he's got a chance for a roll in the hay first](#). Larraq then moves to regard D'Argo as he goes over the story Aeryn and Crichton told him, which is that they recaptured the prisoners on a "new technologies training flight." Aeryn adds that "NewTech" has been experimenting with Leviathan mastery without the use of control collars, and Larraq is intrigued, so Crichton tells him that they have neural control over Pilot, and Pilot controls *Moya*. He asks Larraq what his mission is, but Larraq tells him he doesn't have the clearance to know anything about it. However, clearance or not, he does tell him that he has one crate he's got to get back into Peacekeeper control, and it's top priority, so he'll give Crichton the coordinates of their base, which is only twenty arns away. Aeryn quickly notes that that must mean the base is in the Uncharted Territories. Larraq: "It's a new Gammak base. Secret. Need-to-know only." The prisoners look chagrined, as well they might. I mean, not only are they in much greater danger of being recaptured, they've just realized that all those times they said "Uncharted Territories," they were employing a misnomer.

In the cargo hold or whatever, the female Peacekeeper objects to how roughly the two plug-uglies are handling "the Captain's prize." Chiana appears with a small tray and asks if she can approach. The bald one is all, "Get as close as you want, darling." Translator microbes everywhere: "[*Eye-roll*]." Chiana explains there's food in the center chamber, and that "the Captain" ordered her to attend to them, prompting the bald guy, whose name is "Thorn," to appreciatively note that Crichton has a non-regulation servant/implied concubine. So the whole Peacekeeper purity thing is even more hypocritical than we thought. I'm so shocked that I can't even clutch my pearls. I can still manage to type, though -- isn't it funny how that works? The blonde Peacekeeper is not having the slightest bit of this, and tells the "Sergeant" that she wants to check the contents of the crate, "now." Thorn produces a key, causing a circular lock to rotate and some air to escape the apparently vacuum-sealed

container. Chiana watches with interest, and then Thorrn tells her that he's been out with just "my Captain and these two" for nearly a full cycle. Chiana's all, "You're horny? Yeah, I can work with that." After a bit of flirtation, she "accidentally" spills some liquid on the dude's pants, and makes a big show of wiping it off personally. Thorrn doesn't mind *at all*, but Blondie is all, "Food in the center chamber? Got it. Now leave us." Hee. Chiana obeys, but once she's out of sight, we see her unfold her towel to reveal that she made an impression of Thorrn's key with some malleable material she had with her. She snarks, "Too easy." Another missed playground-ism: "I know you are, but what am I?"

-- Page 4 --

Center chamber. Aeryn and Larraq enter to find the two three other Peacekeepers chowing away. Aeryn, noting with distaste that they failed to show any deference to the Captain's entrance, sniffs that they don't pay attention to rank. Larraq, with some amusement, says that his crew will die at his command, without question. "But make them stand up just because I walk into a room? I respect them too much for that." The crew's all, "Yeah, that's nice, but about the whole 'dying at your command' thing..." Larraq segues into asking if Aeryn's come across Special Ops before, and she tells him everyone of her rank has heard of them. He asks what it is they call his people, and she supplies, "Black Ghosts." The conversation continues with Aeryn looking down her nose at the Black Ghosts' "unkempt uniform(s) and the undisciplined attitude." In short, Aeryn's become the England to the Black Ghosts' Australia. And it's about time someone represented England, since Crichton isn't doing the job *at all*. Another upshot: These two kind of like each other.

Crichton releases D'Argo's chains as D'Argo snarls, "This sham is over." Obviously he shares my opinion of the accent. After a bit of exposition that the uniforms Crichton and Aeryn are wearing were left behind by the Peacekeepers, Zhaan suggests that perhaps D'Argo is right and they should strike while they still have the element of surprise, especially since *Moya* is in the late stages of her pregnancy. Crichton counters with the point that they should learn all they can from the Peacekeepers, particularly since they don't even know if the base to which they're heading is the only one in the area. D'Argo: "I can tell you one thing for free: I will not be chained up again." Heh. Also, he's not having the door locked. Zhaan goes to run all this by Rygel, but he's gone, having used his secret escape route, so Crichton suggests they find him before he screws everything up. D'Argo: "Yeah, let's find him before *you* screw it up." Nanny nanny boo boo! Also, hee.

Crichton, Zhaan, and D'Argo are heading off to find Rygel when they hear a Peacekeeper coming. They hastily retreat, and Zhaan helpfully locks herself in, but D'Argo balks at putting the chains back on, and Crichton, rather than duck out and close the door so there's a chance they'll get away with this, idiotically stands there saying D'Argo's name in a "You're not getting dessert until you eat your peas" voice. Thorrn appears and sees what's going on, so D'Argo fakes attacking Crichton. Thorrn rushes in and whacks D'Argo off Crichton, and he and Crichton slide out and close the door ahead of D'Argo savagely rushing them. Thorrn, pleased with himself, says that Crichton's lucky he happened along. Crichton, for his part, threatens to bring Thorrn up on charges if he ever lays his hands on him again. I assume Aeryn briefed him on Peacekeeper etiquette, but GOOD GOD, the accent. [David Boreanaz](#) is all, "The

badness of my "Irish" accent is *nothing* compared to this," and he is absolutely right. Also, in Thorrn's defense, you heard how horny he is -- can you really blame him? Once Crichton and Thorrn are gone, Zhaan compliments D'Argo's performance, but he's in no mood to hear it.

-- Page 5 --

Back in the Center Chamber, Larraq asks Aeryn if she's ever flown anything "sexier" than a Leviathan. Aeryn does not say, "This one time? At flight camp?" She does, however, list her early flying history, ending at flight school at sixteen cycles. Larraq asks why she waited so long, and Aeryn smiles as she confesses that until then, her feet wouldn't reach the pedals. Heh. And normally, I'd be a little annoyed at Aeryn paying attention to this interloper, but I can't really blame her, given that (a) this guy is hot, and (b) Crichton is running around talking like the Queen's retarded cousin's retarded cousin. Aeryn asks about the thing in the crate, and they flirt a bit more, but Larraq gets serious as he tells her to stay away from it. Aeryn takes in the fairly obvious fact that he's primarily saying that for her protection, not the cargo's, and then shifts gears as she notes that he's got a stasis gun, which is for "capture, not killing." At Larraq's silence, she notes that a Gammak base is "science-military," and wonders if it's wise to take the thing there. Larraq opines that science-military is perfect. "Let them deal with it."

Speaking of "it," we get a glimpse of the sarcophagus-like crate...

... and then Chiana, with the help of a DRD, is fashioning a key from the impression she took...

... and then Rygel's examining the crate when Chiana enters. Rygel's startled, and snarks that he should have her wear a bell around her neck. Chiana: "Keep your fantasies to yourself." Rygel gags at the idea of having a fantasy about Chiana, but Chiana calls him out as the puppet that doth protest too much. And somewhere, William Shakespeare has just about had it.

Thorrn tells Larraq he's going to check out the cargo bay. Personally, I think Larraq should take what he can get if he's going to ogle Aeryn rather than help in the search. Not, as usual, that I necessarily blame him.

Rygel babbles some more, and Chiana, not having it, tells him he's there for the same reason she is -- to see if there's anything worth "snurching." Write your own joke about Chiana's snurch here. Rygel: "I don't snurch. I... *procure*." Hee. Chiana suggests they split whatever's inside, to which Rygel objects, since he was there first. Chiana's possession of the key, however, causes him to agree to the even split. I think these two really do like each other, because otherwise I don't know what's keeping Chiana from using Rygel to practice her kickball skills. Chiana inserts the key, and a smaller container slides out of the first one. Rygel totally wusses out, so Chiana opens it, noting that it's hot. Inside is a really ugly rubber alien that looks like a cross between *E.T.* and a battery chicken. Now I just made myself want to go vegetarian. If history is any indication, though, that urge will pass.

-- Page 6 --

Thorrn approaches.

Chiana asks Rygel if he recognizes the species. Rygel: "Even if I did, I wouldn't admit it." Hee. He just has no idea that he's not exactly the fairest of them all either, and God

love him for it. Chiana says that whatever it is, it's still alive, but they don't get much farther than that before they hear Thorrn at the door...

... who enters after Chiana and Rygel have hidden, and draws his gun upon seeing the crate open. He kneels down by it, which doesn't seem like a great idea, but I could buy that he doesn't know the full details of the cargo they're carrying. Something seems to incapacitate him as he touches the creature, but he's recovered by the time the other male Peacekeeper flunky enters. He tries to call Larraq, but doesn't get far before Thorrn shoots him dead. Also, Larraq didn't have his earpiece on to hear the warning that Thorrn was about to shoot him, so it's nice that that loyalty to the death he was bragging about earlier went to such good use. Pilot reports the weapons fire to the "prisoners," and D'Argo, Qualta blade in hands, orders Pilot to open the cell door. Back in the cargo bay, Thorrn, with a maniacal look, chokes the battery chicken to death. As if those things didn't have it rough enough already.

Aeryn and the two other Peacekeepers head for the cargo bay.

Rygel panics and runs off. Chiana hisses at him, presumably because she's too big to follow him, but Thorrn hears her, and soon he's got her out in the open. He raises his gun, but then -- presumably realizing that if he were to kill her, he'd be the likely suspect -- he changes tacks and lays one on her. And of course, if anyone was going to get this disease through a sexual act, it's Chiana. Anyway, Thorrn gets all stupid again, while Chiana's eyes glow green. She head-butts Thorrn into unconsciousness. Outside, the rescue party has reached the door. Inside, Chiana's about to snap Thorrn's neck, but she hears the team coming. Aeryn enters and quickly sees the dead chicken, and asks what's going on. Larraq tensely tells her, "It's escaped." From behind them, Crichton asks, "*What* has escaped?" My hopes that you'd abandon that travesty of an accent before the end of Act Two. Also, the thing that's currently inside green-eyed Chiana, who's watching from the shadows.

After the break, Aeryn finds Thorrn unconscious, but Larraq warns her not to touch him. As Thorrn gets to his feet, Larraq explains that the fugitive they're after is an "intellant" virus, and was using the rubber chicken as a host when they isolated it. Exposition continues, letting us know that when Larraq and Co. caught the virus, it could only infect one host at a time, but once it gets a chance, it'll lay its spores. Thanks, Larraq. Not only are we getting one of those explanations that's really an "explanation," but you gave Crichton the impetus to "repeat," "Spohhhhhwwwzzzz." Like I said, "thanks." We wrap up with the information that if the virus is in the same host for an arn or more, it can lay a couple million spores, and then, according to Aeryn, "this whole end of the galaxy is in some serious frelling dren." The good news is that the virus isn't airborne -- it can only jump hosts through physical proximity. Thorrn doesn't remember anything about what happened, and then Chiana chooses this moment to pop out of her hiding place. Even if, as seems likely, she had no exit other than into the room, I'm not sure why she didn't bide her time and try to wait out the arn. She could always pretend to be unconscious if they happened to find her, which doesn't seem all that likely to have happened. Anyway, Chiana spins a yarn pointing the finger at Rygel, and the Peacekeepers disperse to try to find him. Crichton, after far too much re-exposition of what we just heard, thinks perhaps it's time to end their charade, but Aeryn warns him that the Peacekeepers will shoot at anything they don't trust, and basically bites out that the whole situation is a fiasco. "It



is a grave misfortune that uniform did not fit me." I take that to mean she would have sided with Zhaan and D'Argo on the issue of jumping the Peacekeepers while they had the chance. Or maybe she simply gets nastier under pressure, but I've never heard of anything like that happening. Aeryn leaves, and Crichton tells Chiana to stick with him, as she'll be safer that way. Chiana smiles to herself, and we hear a snake's rattle on the soundtrack for the legions of us that were thinking the virus was suddenly going to turn over a new leaf.

-- Page 7 --

The Peacekeepers are searching when D'Argo, with Zhaan at his side, shoots at them from around a bend in the corridor. The Peacekeepers are about to rush the "prisoners" when Crichton tries the gambit of yelling out about the situation on the ship. Chiana, for her part, is in the back of the crowd, unwatched, and given that [we know she's so good at hiding](#), I really don't understand why she doesn't just take off for the (now less than an) arn and lay the goddamn spores. Maybe she can't bear to leave before she figures out what part of England Crichton's trying to make like he comes from. Anyway, everyone reluctantly lowers their weapons and agrees to the plan.

Cut to the Peacekeepers briefing the rest of the group. The blonde tells them that the virus's best defense is to jump from one host to another until nobody knows who it's in, and then to wait and lay its spores. And yet Chiana continues to hang around. Zhaan asks if there's a test for its presence, and is told that a host will show signs of high acidity, but only after the virus leaves its body. Not only do I think this plot is preposterous, it also bears certain similarities to the *Star Trek: TOS* episode "Wolf In The Fold," which is not exactly a good thing. Yet, the dramatic tension works for me overall. What is it about this show? Anyway, they split up into groups of two, and stress no physical contact with Rygel. You know, this group really is pretty thick not to entertain the possibility that Chiana could be the host here, ESPECIALLY the Peacekeepers, who supposedly have such experience with the virus. It's like, "Rygel's got the virus because Chiana says so!" "Is that that same Chiana who told us a story about a Muppet overpowering a Peacekeeper, which is also a story that no one else happened to witness?" "Um..." It just goes to show you that that old Luxan saying had it right: When you assume, you make an eema of you and me. Or something.

Pilot reports to Crichton that the DRDs can find no trace of Rygel. Well, they were quite useful earlier, so they get a pass. Plus, they're adorable. After some shots of pairs searching, we cut to the blonde Peacekeeper (named "Hassan") telling Zhaan that the virus leaves behind a mild hallucinogenic, rendering its hosts incapable of remembering their possession, or whatever. I mean, so preposterous. With all the weapons at its disposal, we're to believe that this thing routinely has trouble inhabiting the same host for a measly arn? It should have wiped out the entire galaxy by now! Unless "intellant" means "lazy as all get out," which is possible, considering it's not a word and all. All right -- enough said about this storyline. No promises on the accent, though. Zhaan tells Hassan that an entire Delvian colony was once wiped out by an intellant virus, and she lost family to it. Hassan keeps looking around for Rygel, so Zhaan sighs, "Sorry to bore you." Well, she does have something on her mind, here. And that's good, because letting your guard down seems to result in [gory deaths among female Peacekeepers](#), but it looks like that won't happen here.

-- Page 8 --

Crichton and Chiana enter an access shaft. Lingering shot on Chiana, rattler sound, OH MY GOD SHE'S POSSESSED WE GET IT. Although I think it would be funny if Crichton realized Chiana was possessed because the virus made her act more demure than usual. Like, "Wait, you're wearing underwear? VIRUS ALERT!"

Aeryn and Larraq. Aeryn asks the valid question of why they didn't kill the virus, and Larraq tells her that wasn't the mission. Aeryn asks why they would do such a thing, as if the whole concept of the Gammak base doesn't scream "biological warfare" louder than that rubber chicken's death cry. Wake up, sister. Aeryn wonders at the price, as Larraq has to this point lost four members of his crew, and again, her whole "Peacekeepers behave how, now?" attitude seems totally ridiculous. Suffocate rubber chickens if you must, but don't suffocate us with the exposition, please.

D'Argo and Thorrn enter an access shaft.

Crichton tells Chiana that the arm is almost up, like, no kidding. Just then, Aeryn reports that they've found Rygel. He's hiding in some small vent or something, and Larraq trains the stun gun on him. Aeryn tells Larraq that Rygel is trapped, but he doesn't seem to have a clear shot at him. Oh my God, here are Chiana and Crichton, and WHY DIDN'T SHE SLIP AWAY? I mean, I know with sci-fi, complaining about errors of logic is like returning Swiss cheese to the supermarket and complaining about the holes. But still. I mean, here's a thought: she goes to see Pilot, jumps to him, and uses his control over *Moya* to cut off life support, killing everyone on board. Then they head for the nearest heavily populated planet. Sound good? Is that "intellant" enough? Anyway, Rygel yells that he wasn't the only one there, and meanwhile, Chiana, thinking no one's watching her, behaves in a very intellant-virus-like way, causing Crichton to look at her funny. Larraq of course stuns Rygel right before he can say who else was there, and then we see Zhaan look behind her and see Crichton and Chiana acting weirdly, because the virus has chosen the moment it could lay the spores to jump to Crichton's body. The only bright side I can see is that it's got to be better at the British accent than Crichton is.

In a pedeconference, Zhaan says they must find a way to destroy the virus without killing Rygel, and D'Argo snits that it would be easier to do in her apothecary than in a locked cell. The virus tells them no by way of ad-libbing a *Ghostbusters* reference, and says he'll try to get the information they need out of Hassan. A reluctant D'Argo and Zhaan return to their cells, and D'Argo is locked in without incident, but before Crichton gets to do the same to Zhaan, Thorrn appears, so Crichton back-punches Zhaan in the face to make it look good, only he goes full force with it. Ouch. Zhaan, hurt in more ways than one, holds a hand to her nose as Crichton swaggers off.

-- Page 9 --

In the cargo bay, Larraq locks Rygel in the crate as Aeryn duplicitously asks what will happen to Rygel once the virus is leeches out of him. Larraq says that Rygel is as good as dead, and Hassan adds that it's not a pretty process. And they know this how? It doesn't sound like they've captured a virus before, and obviously they never leeches the virus out of the rubber chicken, so how do they know that their process will even work? I'm going to borrow Keckler's "Not realistic, entertaining." I understand it's well-used in situations such as this. Hassan leaves as Larraq zips the dead Peacekeeper and the rubber chicken up in body bags, and then asks if Aeryn has

ever thought about going Special Ops. Well, she hadn't before, but the competence with which this mission has been handled is certainly making her think... once. Larraq, though, thinks Aeryn's talents are being wasted, and plus, "I like the idea of having you nearby." Once again, can't really blame him. He chalks the unlikelihood of them serving together up to bad timing, and starts to leave, but Aeryn admits that timing has nothing to do with it. Larraq returns basically to offer her a job, and suggests they talk about it when they get to the Gammak base. I don't know whom I feel worse for -- Larraq, who's not going to make it to the Gammak base, or Aeryn, who totally will. Also, Larraq is pretty hot. Aeryn and I both wonder where the hell Crichton is. Oh, here he is, with the stupid rattler of evil viruses accompanying him, sauntering in to see Hassan in the apothecary. I assume the virus is worried that Hassan will actually create an antibody to it with Zhaan's supplies, otherwise it could HOLE UP AND LAY THE DAMN SPORES. It still seems weak, but let's move on. Crichton takes a moment to be all spider to her fly, but then slams her head down on the table, grabs something heavy, and bashes her head in like an overripe cantaloupe. He gives the stun gun (which she had with her... why?) similar treatment, and saunters off, without disposing of the materials in the apothecary, so there goes even that flimsy reason. Also, yikes. Crichton is not going to be happy when he wakes up from this. Zhaan and D'Argo are whispering about the location of the virus, and then Chiana shows up, saying that Pilot told her Zhaan wanted to see her. Basically, we can infer that between the suspicious behavior she witnessed while Rygel was being captured, combined with Crichton's not pulling his punch at all, Zhaan thinks that the virus was never in Rygel at all, but in Chiana. She asks Chiana to lick her bedcover, as it contains litmus fibers. First off, file that away for later, but more importantly, I wouldn't lick anything of Zhaan's unless I was sure she'd done laundry before her last exposure to bright light. The test quickly confirms that Chiana did host the virus, and D'Argo concludes that now it's not in Rygel, but someone else. This is a really tense storyline if you don't really pay attention to the details. I'll have to try that. Seriously, though, just about everyone's got things going on underneath the surface that makes this a very dark and complicated episode. Ironically, it's Crichton's last episode for a long time, if not ever, to behave like a big happy dork, so let's enjoy that while we can.

-- Page 10 --

Aeryn bustles into Command and asks Pilot why their speed has increased. Pilot sardonically says it was the Captain's orders, so Aeryn turns to Crichton and asks if that's true, in a "What are you *doing*, you lunkhead?" undertone. Unfortunately, this is not an episode wherein Crichton is possessed of any subtlety concerning language. Crichton makes a show of saying that he wants to get to the base and take care of the virus as soon as possible. When Larraq moves out of earshot, Aeryn hisses at Crichton, asking what he's doing. Crichton bites out that he's doing what a commander in his situation would do, so she can just shut up. He then talks to Larraq, and I'm just going to assume that the spores don't exist at all or simply aren't important to the virus, because otherwise it wouldn't make much sense for it to start a conversation that's half a step away from amounting to "I'm an intellant virus! Ask me how!" Just then, Thorrrn rushes in with the report of Hassan's death. Crichton starts to move for a gun, but D'Argo and Chiana rush in with weapons of their own. Larraq draws his pistol, but Aeryn slaps it away and kicks Thorrrn's gun, causing him to miss

the "prisoners." God, she's awesome. Zhaan appears and accuses Crichton of harboring the virus. A short melee ensues, and I guess everyone forgot the directive about avoiding physical contact, but again, it is Crichton we're talking about. Zhaan, realizing she touched Crichton, breathes, "Oh, no." If you think about it, that pretty much rules her out. A large Mexican standoff ensues, and Crichton dumbly asks what they're all looking at. Zhaan explains that the virus is in one of them. Of course, they should give Crichton the acid test to be sure that the virus isn't pulling a double-cross here, but it's not like they have reason to believe that the thing is tricky at all. When we get back, everyone is yelling at the top of their lungs. It's rather amusing. Other good news: Crichton has finally dropped the accent. Zhaan explains to "John" what happened, and Larraq asks what's up with "this 'John' dren." D'Argo: "That topic is *off* at the moment." Maybe it's the moderator in me, but that's got to be the line of the episode. Crichton asks if the virus can reenter someone who's hosted it, and the answer is no, so Crichton gets Chiana to his side, as they're the safe ones. Of course, Rygel could tell them that Thorrn is off-limits as well, but he might be in a bit of a mood after being stunned and put on ice, so to speak. He'll at least need a cookie and an ear massage. Crichton asks about the stun gun, and is told that he destroyed it. He doesn't really need much more bad news at the moment, so it's just as well he doesn't think to ask where Hassan is. D'Argo pipes up that Zhaan volunteered to make an antidote, so they all move out.

-- Page 11 --

In the apothecary, Zhaan slaves away as everyone else holds their weapons at the ready. Crichton's staring at Hassan's corpse, and you'd think if the Peacekeepers could spare a body bag for the rubber chicken, they could do something about their fallen comrade on the floor. Chiana consoles Crichton, and I'm really impressed with the depth they've given her in so short a time, because it's almost like she needs to believe in his goodness even more that he does. Zhaan finishes up the brew and injects herself, but nothing happens. She tells the others that "an acid-based life form" would have a noticeable reaction to the level of alkaline. I assume she's not talking about the writers, not that being an acid-based life form in that sense is necessarily a bad thing. Everyone's apparently wised up a bit, as they seem to be wondering whether Zhaan could be lying through her teeth, but she protests that they all saw the ingredients she put in, and Crichton, the other scientist, backs her up. Aeryn steps up to take the next injection, and she too is clean, so she gets to cross the room like Crichton just picked her for his softball team. They would totally kick ass, too. Thorrn takes the next one, and he, as we already knew, is clean, although... wouldn't the residual acid from his turn as the host react with the alkaline? Eh, it's not worth wondering about, as it's the David of plot holes amid a colony of Goliaths. Now that it's down to Larraq and D'Argo, everyone starts yelling again. Larraq yells that they should just test D'Argo to prove it's him so they can kill him, which betrays him as the host, since the real Larraq wants to capture the virus, not that anyone notices. Crichton makes a big show of playing "eeny meeny miny mo," and I was all for the elementary-school stuff, but even in kindergarten I was able to predict who I was going to land on, especially with FOUR SYLLABLES AND TWO PEOPLE. Anyway, Crichton injects D'Argo, who, after a second, is fine, so Larraq runs out ahead of everyone shooting at him. It's too bad the DRDs weren't around for this one. Crichton

orders Pilot to cut off Larraq's possible escape routes, and we see doors closing all over the place.

Thorrn and Aeryn are looking for Larraq. Aeryn soon finds him, though not the way she wants, as he jumps out and grabs her from behind. He tells her that Larraq's body will get him into the Gammak base, and then Thorrn appears, and Larraq shoots him dead. His crewmen must be taking some crap in the afterlife for their trust in him. Crichton and D'Argo rush in behind Thorrn, and Larraq makes to shoot them as well, but Aeryn manages to knock his gun away. However, he draws a ginormous knife and tells Crichton that he knows from his time inside him and Chiana how much he and his crew want to stay away from the Gammak base, so all they have to do is let him go in the Marauder and they'll be free. If the virus knows so much about the thoughts of the people it inhabits, you'd think it might have picked up on THE FUEL LEAK THAT BROUGHT THEM THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE. D'Argo growls about the spores that I no longer care about, and then Aeryn yells for Crichton to do what he has to do. Larraq cruelly tells Aeryn that the real Larraq "really liked you. A lot." He then raises the knife and stabs Aeryn in the side. You guys, I'm starting to think that "intellant" means "asshole." Seriously, that was really hard to watch for a lot of reasons, but the terror on Aeryn's face as she looks at Crichton, afraid that the end has come for them far too soon, is definitely the worst part. Crichton and D'Argo get all slo-mo with the "AERYN!" and Larraq pitches her into their arms and rushes off. D'Argo, probably knowing that he's the one in this situation that has to think clearly, orders Crichton to go after Larraq, since he can't be re-infected. Crichton obeys, and D'Argo yells to Chiana and Zhaan that Larraq is headed to the transport hangar, and I love the fact that Chiana instantly understands that she's meant to go down there, since she's immune as well. D'Argo desperately begs Zhaan to get down there and help him as Aeryn writhes in bloody pain.

-- Page 12 --

Soon after, Chiana jumps on Larraq's back, and he throws her off, but in grabbing him, she rips off his Peacekeeper ID card or whatever. Let's all take a moment to imagine what would have happened if not for that little occurrence. (Another reason this episode is both better and harder to watch knowing what happens after -- the might-have-beens and might-not-have-beens. Count them! I'll wait.)

Larraq fires up the Marauder. Crichton comes upon a still-half-dazed Chiana, who manages to order Pilot to seal the outer doors. Crichton belays that order, and asks if the ship is still leaking fuel. Upon hearing an affirmative, Crichton tells Pilot to let Larraq go, and we see the Marauder depart. Crichton tells Pilot to prepare for starburst, and over Pilot's objection, says that he only needs the first stage. "And I want this ship nose to tail where she is, one hundred and eighty degrees, right now!" He's a lot more authoritative with his normal accent. Pilot obeys, and, when the ship is in position, starts the first stage of starburst. The energy from *Moya* causes the leaked fuel to ignite, and a very cool shot of the flames overtaking the ship ensues, culminating in the ship exploding as Crichton intones, "Boom." I guess it was too much to hope for a "Yippee-ky-ay, motherfreller." Also, the shot is cool enough and we're close enough to the end that I won't even wonder about the flames merrily dancing their way through oxygenless space.

Zhaan is attending to a predictably pissy Rygel, but D'Argo enters to rumble that Rygel can expect less than no sympathy from him, due to his compliance in letting the virus loose. Zhaan cuts in that she's sure Rygel has learned his lesson. I'm not sure what she's basing that on, but we've got a lot of ground to cover in these last couple of minutes, starting with the fact that D'Argo is holding the chains from his cell in his hand. He tells Zhaan he'll never be chained up again, and she says she prays that will be the case. D'Argo: "You can pray all you like. I was expressing a fact, not a hope." Dude, I realize that this part of your personal journey is important, so I'll forgive the overdrama, but we already knew how you feel, so could we get to the beautiful stab victim already? No, Zhaan has to express her sympathy, and then Rygel has to fogey his complaint that he knew Crichton's plan would never work. Zhaan smells bullshit, and snarks that maybe next time they'll follow a plan of Rygel's. D'Argo intones that he prays (oh, it's okay for you now?) that there will never be a next time. They all bow their heads. Sigh. Another down ending -- oh, wait, there's one more scene left! Hope springs eternal!

-- Page 13 --

Crichton is mid-vigil at Aeryn's bedside when she comes to. It's significant and heartbreaking that he's holding the weapon he used to kill Hassan. Of course, it's probably best that he had the experience of committing a horrible act while under the influence of someone else. I wouldn't want him to be totally unprepared for Harvey. Aeryn's relieved that the virus is dead, but Crichton has to break the news that Larraq shared the same fate. Aeryn stares into space and recalls that he stabbed her. Crichton: "You got lucky. He missed your heart." Yup, happy ending! And I'm sure Aeryn's response of "Closer than you think" isn't important at all! After Crichton expositis that he still doesn't know what the Gammak base is all about, Aeryn asks what he's doing in there, as if there's any other place in the entire universe that he'd rather be at the moment, including home. Crichton hems and haws until Aeryn, fixing him right in the eyes, says, "Thank you." Crichton can't meet her gaze as he tells her not to mention it, and Aeryn asks, "Why would I ever mention it?" Well, at least we know the Sebacean sense of humor isn't located in the paraphoral nerve. If by the merest chance you don't get that joke, you will next time. See you then!

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## - Do Not Go Gentle -

-- Page 1 --

I know you guys have been waiting for this one (and the next one) for a while. If it's any consolation, there was almost a four-month break between when "[A Bug's Life](#)" and this episode originally aired. Wow, look at me, thinking for a minute that there was any chance you didn't already know that. It *has* been a long time. Let's get to it. We open on Aeryn working a hard standing bag, hard. I wonder if she visualizes people she hates as she's throwing her techniques. If that's the case, the poor bag is coming to realize that she hates some people a *lot*. Crichton enters and wonders whether she should be working out so soon after Larraq's attack, but Aeryn grits that her muscles have completely healed. I'd make a joke about her heart taking longer to



mend, if I thought I could get away with it without crying. Crichton tells her they called her three times for dinner. She snits that she's not hungry, and he evenly tells her that it was rude of her not to reply, particularly when he was the one who had to guard her plate from a certain gluttonous puppet. She barks at him to leave her alone, but he says he's not going anywhere until she tells him what the problem is. After a few more punches, she vomits what looks like it might be blood and collapses onto the floor. Crichton kneels at her side and notes she's ice cold. I'm not really understanding her physiology here, and I guess it's just as well I'm getting that out of the way, because her upcoming explanation isn't exactly going to clear things up. Crichton wants to go to Zhaan for help, but Aeryn just wants to get to her Prowler. Crichton takes a moment to work out her implication before horrifiedly telling her that she's not going to die. A steely Aeryn tells Crichton that her muscles are in fact healed, but Larraq's knife pierced her "paraphoral nerve," which doesn't regenerate. She goes on that within fifty or sixty arns, the nerve will fail, with fatal consequences. "There's nothing you can do about it." If she thinks Crichton is going to lie down and agree, maybe she's confused from the long hiatus as well. She tells him that the only treatment is a tissue graft from a genetically compatible donor. It would be sad if they found such a donor, only to have him turn out to be gay. What do you mean, that wouldn't matter? What kind of crazy society are they running here? Crichton points out they've got "two, three days," but Aeryn thinks that's a generous estimate, and they're nowhere near a Sebacean colony. Crichton: "But we are near a Peacekeeper base." Aeryn takes that in, and Crichton goes on that [Larraq & Co. left the coordinates](#). He reaches a hand up to stroke her cheek, and Aeryn's face shatters as she realizes her good fight isn't over yet, nor, despite her earlier bravado, does she want it to be. Honey, *if you only knew*.

-- Page 2 --

Command. Rygel: "You're not just *fahrbot*; you're *magra-fahrbot*." Just in case you were wondering whether my closed captioning was working. Crichton has told the others his plan, which apparently is to infiltrate the Gammak base posing as Larraq. The others point out the difficulties of the plan: he'll have to pull off the deception, find a tissue match, and obtain a sample. In addition, if he fails, he'll compromise them all, which is especially serious, since *Moya* might not be able to get them out of there, given the advanced state of her pregnancy. I may not officially be in on this little powwow, but I will nonetheless point out that no one has mentioned the gravest problem of all, which is that we'll be forced once again to endure THE WORST "BRITISH" ACCENT IN THIS GALAXY OR ANY OTHER. Anyway, Crichton gets all offended at the suggestion that they do nothing, which... maybe I'm giving everyone too much credit, but I don't think, with the probable exception of Rygel, that that's what they were suggesting. He asks if they're happy with the idea of Aeryn dying, and D'Argo and Zhaan both pipe up a negative. Actually, I don't know that "pipe up" is the right expression in D'Argo's case, given that he doesn't so much "speak" as "rumble," but such are the limitations of language. Crichton rounds on Rygel, who says it doesn't matter what he wants -- Aeryn is dying, and the most sensible course of action is... Crichton: "I'm sorry, Sparky, what were you saying?" Geez, Crichton, you asked him a question. Kind of rude to drift off like that. Oh, I see, he was going for intimidation, and Rygel gets it: "To do everything in our power to save Aeryn's life." Zhaan wordlessly concurs, and Crichton stalks out of the room. Rygel: "Even though

it's likely to get us killed." I think Crichton might give you that one, but it's probably not the best time to test him. Credits.

Crichton, in his flight suit, comes to see Aeryn, who's doubled over in the middle of a coughing fit. Once she's shoved her lung back down her throat, she tells Crichton that the mission is foolhardy, and it makes no sense for him to die as well. You seem to be having some respiratory difficulties there, my dear, so I hope you don't take it too badly if I tell you not to waste your breath. Pilot cuts in that they've reached the designated coordinates, and then Aeryn asks Crichton if humans have some sort of ritual "for occasions like these"? I'm not sure if she's referring to the fact he needs an awful lot of luck here, or if it's more that there's a good chance this is the last time they'll ever see each other. But in either case, if I were Crichton, I'd go with making out as the answer. They shake hands instead, and Aeryn gets to her feet and tremblingly wishes him good luck. He leaves her, frightened and alone. Sniff.

-- Page 3 --

Beauty shot of *Moya* in front of a large reddish-orange planet. Pilot tells the crew that it's an uninhabitable gas giant, but there's a moon on the other side large enough to have an atmosphere. I'd guess it's Yavin, but while we're certainly in a galaxy far, far away, I don't think seven years is "a long time ago" on quite the scale they mean. Anyway, the mass of the planet will shield *Moya* from the moon base completely.

Crichton is checking on what must be Aeryn's Prowler, since Larraq went and got his ship blown up and all. Chiana appears, wearing a traveling cloak complete with shawl over her head. I wonder if the action figure for Chiana comes with accessories, and if so, if they have age ratings on them. Crichton isn't amenable to the idea of Chiana coming with him, but she informs him that what he needs on this mission is a talented burglar. Crichton asks what her angle is, and she tells him she wants to earn her keep. He doesn't believe her, probably still slightly miffed over the role she played in freeing the virus last episode, but as proof of both her intentions and her usefulness, she forks over [the identification chip she lifted from Larraq](#). She adds that it will provide maximum-security clearance, and that's all the convincing Crichton needs, as he could use the help. He dangerously, and rather sexily, swings her around and adds, "*If you're gonna help.*" I know you didn't ask, but if she won't, I will.

Another beauty shot of the Prowler leaving *Moya* and heading for the moon. Crichton tells Chiana they'll pull the same routine they did on the Marauder commandos, and they quickly get within visual range of the desolate-looking base, which is perched on a huge outcropping, and which Chiana notes resembles a mining complex or possibly a refinery. Crichton observes that it looks like it's been "nuked," and wonders if it's camouflaged or simply dead. Chiana smiles that it's not dead, and reports that eight targeting systems have locked onto them. Crichton opens a channel and asks what's up with the weapons locks. "Can't you tell a friend from a foe?" Given that you just unleashed THE ACCENT on them, I think they've actually got things exactly right. The base attendant tells him to identify himself, and after some bickering about whether the channel is secure, Crichton intimidates the guy enough to secure a landing vector, much to Chiana's glee. And here I thought [her ears were supposed to be highly sensitive](#).

-- Page 4 --

After we see the Prowler head into the base, we cut to Crichton having disembarked, and a "welcoming" committee approaching him. He menacingly sidles up to two masked guards who have weapons trained on him. Behind him, the committee reaches him, and it's two more Peace-troopers and two guys in the red-leather officer uniforms. The older, higher-ranking one introduces himself as "Tollona Javio," the Commander of the base, and says his thirtyish companion is "Lieutenant Heskon." Crichton poses as Larraq, and tells Javio not even to think of asking what his assignment is. Javio agrees, but asks for the ident chip, which Crichton produces and Heskon collects. The chip passes muster, and Javio welcomes him, but asks how he knew about the base. Crichton declines even to give a story for that one, and demands quarters for him and his "personal server." I'd be willing to bet Chiana's been called worse. Speaking of whom, she appears and languidly tells him to make sure the quarters are comfortably cool. Honey, it's a Sebacean base. I don't think that's going to be a problem. Javio is puzzled that "Larraq" brought a civilian with him, but admires his taste. Javio then offers food and drink, and Chiana accepts: "I'd love some refreshment." Crichton heads off...

... and then we're in the station cantina, where Chiana is telling Heskon that she could get used to the place, and that the "raslak" is good and strong. Heskon asks if that's how she likes it, and she agrees: "Strong and hot." That's a surprise -- I never would have guessed from your flirting. Nearby, Javio is also quite entranced by Chiana, and he remarks to Crichton that he's never seen a species like hers. You guys know very well that I love Chiana, but I'd still say this to Javio: Count your blessings. There's some more flirting and drooling and skeezy remarks about how favorable Chiana finds the five-to-one male/female ratio on the base, but I'm going to skip ahead, because suddenly there's a noticeable stir in the room, and everyone turns to see... oh my God, you guys, it's Scorpius! I get to recap his historic entrance into the series that he will forever change! This is so exciting! I'm not going to bother describing his appearance, as it's burned into all your brains, but I will say that even for him, he does not look happy. Javio quickly excuses himself from Crichton's company, and once he's gone, Crichton barks for Chiana to join him. She complies, and *sotto voce*, he asks her what she's doing: "You acting like a trollop was not part of the plan." Well, Crichton, you could say breathing wasn't part of the plan either, but it's still awfully hard for her not to do it. Chiana takes the opportunity to grab his ass, and I'm jealous and good for her, and then she points out that all the attention she's drawing will take everyone's focus off him. Crichton asks if perhaps they could get on with the business of saving Aeryn...

-- Page 5 --

... and then Heskon is showing them to their quarters. They reach a security checkpoint, and Heskon takes Crichton's ident chip again. He swipes it, but then asks Crichton to place his hand in a spot in the machine. Crichton resists at first, but the Peace-troopers snap to attention, and Heskon explains that access to everything past where they are requires genetic verification. Chiana tries to smooth-talk Heskon, but he isn't having it, and he announces that as a Chief Security Officer, he can give Crichton orders in this situation. Crichton seethes, but removes his gloves, and after another withering glare, sticks his hands into the openings on the console. The

computer announces, "Analyzing." Is it me, or are the act breaks getting easier to see coming?

The machine does its thing -- and confirms "Larraq's" identity. Chiana can barely believe their luck, but she and Crichton both hold it together and stay in character. Heskon offers to show them the rest of the way to their quarters, but Crichton declines, and he and Chiana are out of there.

Cut to the two of them pede-wondering how the hell they got away with that when a woman whispers, "Larraq!" They turn, and we see that it's [Gilina](#), of the eponymous "PK Tech Girl." Ooh, nice. I certainly did not expect that at all when I first watched it. Not being familiar with the hit parade of Australian actors on this show does wonders for my ability to be surprised. He doesn't seem to recognize her at first, but she stealthily beckons him to follow her. She enters a room, and hides until they too are inside, at which point she shuts the door and reveals herself. She almost gets shot for her efforts, and Crichton tightly asks what she's doing on the base, and if Crais is there. She informs him that she's been assigned to a new development project, and she doesn't know the specifics, but she assumes it involves producing new weaponry. Crichton seems overly wary of Gilina, given that they totally kissed last time, but maybe it's because she's staring at him rather hungrily, if you know what I mean. Gilina, haven't you heard about the five-to-one ratio? Crichton makes an unnecessary comment about the evils weapons in Peacekeeper hands, like, we know it's been a while but we're still pretty clear on that concept, and then tells Chiana, who wasn't around for "PK Tech Girl," that Gilina's a friend. Gilina gives a good, reasonably subtle glance at Chiana, trying to size up her relationship with Crichton. I don't blame you, girl, but that one will take a while, and we haven't got all day here. Crichton asks how Gilina knew he was there, and she admits she saw him in the officers' lounge. She knew he'd never pass a genetic scan, so she overwrote the security program. Chiana, both duly impressed and already thinking about what else they can use her for, asks if Gilina did all that by herself and from their current location, and Gilina affirms that. Chiana, apparently having more knowledge of how impressive that feat was than Crichton, tells him, "This is a *very* good friend."

-- Page 6 --

Elsewhere, Scorpius is telling Javio that they have to increase the efficiency of "the Aurora Chair." If the mention of the Chair gives you a vague feeling of dread, don't worry. The vagueness will be gone soon enough. Javio says he's understaffed. Scorpius: "Understaffed or mismanaged?" Well, now that Scorpius has arrived, I don't think Javio's management skills are going to continue to be particularly relevant. Crichton produces a box containing a tissue sample of Aeryn's, and tells Gilina that if they don't find a match for it, she'll die. Gilina manages to facially express some suitably complex feelings about Aeryn's predicament, which aren't lost on Chiana, but agrees to help. She says that she'll take the sample to the Medical Unit, and that she'll fake the necessary work orders so the Med Techs won't ask any questions. Crichton's still all over-chivalrous about the whole thing, but Gilina says that he should stay hidden. "Suppose somebody here knew the real Larraq?" She leaves, and Chiana goes to do the same, saying she's going to head back to the lounge and climb all over Heskon's jock some more. Crichton rolls his eyes: "Come home alone!" Hee.

*Moya*. Aeryn's asleep on her bed of paraphoral pain when Rygel floats in on his Thronesled. The hum from it wakes her, and he nervously tells her he came to see how she was doing. Aeryn: "You came to see if I was dead so you could start going through my possessions." Well, I guess now we know that damage to the paraphoral nerve doesn't affect cognitive functions. Rygel informs her that she has no possessions worth taking. Heh. Score one for the obnoxious piece of felt. D'Argo enters and tells Rygel that he's needed on Command, as a quick decision may be needed if the Peacekeepers arrive. Rygel: "Yes! A quick and correct decision." So you're not going, then? No, he zips away, and D'Argo and Aeryn chuckle together about Rygel's massive ego. Aeryn thanks D'Argo for granting her peace. "If a warrior cannot die in battle, she can at least die alone." I'd make a comment, but it's all I can do to look up [this hyperlink](#) without crying.

We cut into the lounge with Chiana delivering the punchline to what sounds like a naughty story, and Heskon laughing his head off. Nice try, dude, but the only way you're bagging her is if the base has its own version of the Holodeck. Javio appears and silently pulls rank on Heskon, who bails like he just remembered he left his Soup For One boiling on the stove. Javio takes the top off a Thermos-looking thing and tells her they can do much better than raslak.

-- Page 7 --

D'Argo finds Zhaan and tells her that Aeryn is deteriorating quickly. Zhaan informs him that all she can do is ease her journey, and that the paraphoral nerve regulates toxin removal functions, so with the damage to it, the poisons in her body will kill her.

D'Argo pointedly asks if she can filter them out. Zhaan, not quite getting it, says she doesn't have the means to do that, but D'Argo responds: "*Moya* does, doesn't she?" Zhaan considers that.

Back in the lounge, Javio wastes no time in proposing that Chiana stay with him.

"Whatever you're getting from Larraq, I can easily double." If that's true, I'm not sure even Chiana can handle him. He makes the point that Covert Ops types are always going to some backwater planet and getting shot up, and Chiana agrees that running from system to system is getting exhausting. Javio asks if they can continue their talk in his quarters. Chiana: "My policy's no free samples." I'm guessing that's a recent amendment. She says she'll think about it, and flirtily withdraws. No, not like *that* -- didn't you hear her about the samples?

Gilina returns and tells Crichton the news is great -- the medics can synthesize the paraphoral tissue, and even better, they've already done so. She hands over a large hypo and tells Crichton that with one dose and some bed rest, Aeryn will be as good as new. Crichton tells her that thanks doesn't even begin to cover his gratitude, and Gilina's heart looks like it's breaking as she kisses him on the forehead. Crichton tells her he'd better get back to the ship, but even though Aeryn's clock is ticking, he can't go through with the total business routine here. His face softens as Gilina sadly notes that they always seem to be saying goodbye. He agrees: "You'd think we'd get better at it." Welcome to humanity, Gilina. She tells him to go, and after a long look, he does. ... Wow, that was a great episode! Hey, when did this show change to a half-hour format?

Okay, it's just that here's where things get awfully rough, from the standpoint of the series as well as that of the episode. As dissonant music plays, Crichton walks down

the hallway, unaware that from a nearby corridor, Scorpius and a tall, long- and auburn-haired woman wearing the same style of uniform as he are approaching. Scorpius and the woman reach the main hallway in time to see Crichton pass. Crichton seems to know something's wrong here, and he doesn't get more than a few steps before Scorpius's creepy singsong informs the guards that Crichton is an impostor. Crichton tries to fight, but he's quickly knocked to the floor. He manages to place the hypo in a smallish aperture almost at floor level before being completely subdued. We linger on a long shot of Aeryn's hidden salvation before heading into another break.

-- Page 8 --

We come back to a shot of a large multicolored light that looks sort of like an oversized dentist's lamp. Fitting, too, because Crichton is strapped into a chair, and while it's normal to feel apprehension in this general set-up, his dread looks oversized as well. I'll answer the question on your mind, Crichton: It is not by any means safe. As we get a full look at the room, we see that Crichton's chair is actually rotating in some sort of gyroscopic frame, and the woman from earlier is nearby operating a large control panel. Scorpius is standing in the entryway regarding Crichton, who asserts that he's Larraq, Peacekeeper Special Ops. Scorpius isn't so much buying that, and gestures to the woman, who pushes a button, causing the mechanism right in front of Crichton's eyes to emit something seemingly very painful. Scorpius signals the woman (oh, okay, she's going to be around for a while: it's Niem) to cut it off after a few seconds, and then introduces himself. Crichton notes that Scorpius doesn't look Sebacean. He's keeping up the accent even now, which isn't exactly going to make me stop associating it with extreme pain. Scorpius in turn notes that Crichton *does* look Sebacean, yet his "energy signature" is quite dissimilar. He asks what species Crichton is, and who he's working for. Crichton tells him to get stuffed, resulting in another dose of pain.

Scorpius muses that perhaps Crichton is trying to provoke him into killing him before he extracts any useful information. "I long ago learned the advantages of patience." I'd think so, because getting into that outfit every morning must be a right bitch. Niem slides a handle on the panel, causing more pain, but also a look into Crichton's mind. We see a jumble of images -- several of *Farscape One* and of the loathed *Maldis* among them -- before Scorpius calls a break. A quivering Crichton asks what the hell that was. Scorpius: "A memory. Random and indistinct at the moment. It will take some time to map your neural patterns." I was going to say "clip show," but we'll go with Scorpius's answer. More pain yields *D'Argo tongue-lashing Crichton*, among other images from the pilot. Scorpius notes that they saw a Leviathan ship, and recalls that there was a report of an escaped Leviathan prison transport. He orders the silent Niem to have Javio check the data files, and then tells Crichton, "You are a most interesting spy." More pain and screaming...

-- Page 9 --

... and then a cross-fade to Aeryn, who's upright and strapped into a contraption herself. It looks like Zhaan has attached some of *Moya's* tendrils to Aeryn's arm, and they're presumably leaching out the toxins. Aeryn asks if Zhaan is sure the procedure won't hurt the ship, and she responds that Pilot assured her that the amount of toxins her body generates is insignificant to an entity the size of *Moya*. In addition, the baby



is old enough to be unaffected as well. Aeryn commends Zhaan on her ingenuity, and Zhaan starts to say that it wasn't her idea. Catching a subtle look of pleading from D'Argo, she tells Aeryn, "It was Pilot's." Fascinating, this dynamic between the two warriors where so much can't be spoken, and props to Zhaan for deftly handling it, even if she doesn't quite understand it. Aeryn struggles to remain conscious.

Gilina, tapped into the security network, unhappily informs Chiana of Crichton's capture. Chiana asks if she can locate him, but Gilina can't access main control. She speculates that they shut it down because they suspect Crichton has an accomplice. "Sooner or later, they'll find out who." Not to make your day any worse, Chiana, but all that attention you drew to yourself may come back to bite you in the ass, and not in the way you might have been expecting.

The machine powers down again, and Crichton sweatily breathes that this is a waste of time, and he's not a spy. Dude, I admire your fortitude, but give it up already. Javio enters and informs Scorpius that according to the report, *Moya* had a Delvian, a Luxan, and a Hynerian aboard, but there was no mention of Crichton or his "female accomplice." That presumably is [the report we saw back in "Till The Blood Runs Clear,"](#) which was before Chiana's time. Scorpius points out that Javio has yet to locate Chiana, and then it's another round of happy fun times in Crichton's head, consisting of [Crais's accusation that Crichton killed his brother with his "white death pod."](#) Javio identifies Crais, and Scorpius recalls that he received special dispensation from the Council to chase it down in the Uncharted Territories. [We know this to be false,](#) but [Scorpius doesn't yet.](#) Javio adds that "First Command" lost contact with his carrier some time ago. Scorpius: "I want to see more of that." Watch the DVD extras, dude. Niem speaks for the first time, saying that she can't locate it again, but she's got something related, which turns out to be Crais's Maldis-fueled fight with Crichton. Scorpius: "I suspect our Captain has turned renegade." I suspect Scorpius has a capacity for understatement. He orders Javio to broadcast a "wide-dispersal message" to Crais's Command Carrier directing him to come to the base immediately. Javio asks if he really thinks Crais will show up. Scorpius: "Certainly. Tell him we have his prey."

-- Page 10 --

Elsewhere, Chiana has donned a tech jumpsuit and a short black wig. Gilina: "I don't even think John would recognize you." I hate to rain on your parade, Gilina, but she kind of just looks like the anime version of herself.

More memories. ["Back And Back And Back To The Future."](#) ["DNA Mad Scientist."](#) ["Thank God It's Friday, Again."](#) Scorpius: "Your memory holds an impressive array of other races, Crichton." That's all well and good until you're the one that has to describe them, you recapper's nightmare. He instructs Niem to search for information on who sent him to the base. Crichton laughs: "It's dÃ©jÃ vu all over again!" He gets zapped for his trouble. I'm surprised that never happened to Yogi Berra. After all, electroshock therapy did have its day.

And now we get to the crux of the matter: [Crichton's conversation with the Ancient,](#) posing as his dad, in "A Human Reaction." But before we get any further, the machine shuts down, and Niem informs us that he's put up a "neural block." Crichton denies responsibility, and I'm inclined to cut him a break, given that he's finally dropped THE ACCENT for good. He giggles, but Scorpius tells Niem to increase the extraction level

and break through the barrier. She pushes it, and from Crichton's reaction, this thing goes to eleven. We now see something new, something Crichton doesn't remember: the Ancients' instructions for creating a wormhole. "Jack" tells Crichton that he won't remember this part of their encounter in his conscious mind, for if he's not smart enough to discover wormhole technology on his own, he's not smart enough to handle it wisely. Poor Crichton. Couldn't his perceived level of judgment be linked to how hot he is instead? He'd certainly get home faster that way. "Jack" goes on that the unconscious knowledge he now possesses will guide him, nothing more -- but the good news is that he's already on the right path. Well, sure, if you don't count a trip to a torture chair controlled by a scary, obsessive, unnatural creature. But I suppose one has to focus on the bigger picture. Scorpius theorizes that Crichton's interest in wormhole technology is the reason he came to the Gammak base, and Crichton insanely laughs as he realizes that's the purpose of the base's existence. Scorpius orders Niem to find the wormhole knowledge. "Segment his mind. As many layers as it takes." If you want a lot of layers from Crichton's mind, Scorpius, I'd suggest you cut pretty thin. The machine gets another workout, and through the extended pain and yelling, Niem notes, "Or his mind will simply liquefy." Scorpius opines that his species is exceptionally strong, but nonetheless orders a short recuperation. Good, I could use it. Crichton slobbers all over himself...

-- Page 11 --

... and then we cut to him being practically carried into a cell. Another dude, light behind him so all we really see is his silhouette, comes rushing up complaining that he doesn't want a roommate. If it's any consolation, dude, I don't think your roommate is going to make much trouble for you at the moment. The guards leave, and the guy screeches at Crichton to move to the other side of the cell. Crichton wearily obliges, and we see that the guy is wearing a metal mask that covers almost the entire right side of his face... oh my God, you guys, it's Stark! I get to recap his historic entrance into the series that he will forever change! This... yeah, I'm not quite selling this one, am I? We get the infamous "my side, your side" chatter from Stark, and then, more calmly, he asks Crichton if he wasn't just in "his" chair as well. Stark goes on that "Scorpy" puts him in the chair over and over and over, and then there's more crazy babbling from Stark as Crichton collapses to the deck and intones, "Danger, Will Robinson. Beware of the chair. Beware of the chair." To quote my beloved Oz from [Buffy](#), [that pretty much sums it up](#).

Aeryn is unconscious as Zhaan, while ministering to her, informs D'Argo that the treatment is succeeding in preventing Aeryn from deteriorating further, but no more. She asks D'Argo why he didn't want Aeryn to know that the treatment was his idea. D'Argo relays Aeryn's earlier wish to die alone. "As a warrior, I should respect her wishes and not interfere." Zhaan tells him that he did a good thing, and that Aeryn doesn't really want to die. D'Argo: "I do not even believe that she wants to die alone." Man, this show is so good. It may sound strange to talk about loss of innocence in characters that have perpetrated some terrible, terrible things, but these three share so much regarding their disillusionment with their respective cultures. At this particular point, Zhaan's made her peace with it more than the other two, but still: They're a mess. Add to that what Crichton will go through for the rest of the series, not to

mention *Moya*, and it starts to make more sense that Chiana is single-handedly holding this bunch together at the moment.

Okay, back to the scene: More bad news, as *Moya* starts having muscular contractions, which have a deleterious effect on Aeryn, forcing Zhaan and D'Argo to halt the treatment. D'Argo lovingly strokes Aeryn's hair as Zhaan expresses her wish that Crichton return soon. Again: If she only knew.

-- Page 12 --

On the base, Gilina and Chiana sneak into an area wherein they can access the computer system.

Stark is in the chair, screaming, "Again, Scorpy! Thrill me again!" You know, this episode has a lot to do with pretty mental images, but I must confess I could have done without that one. Javio enters with Crais in tow, and Niem powers down the machine. Crais asks where Crichton is, and Scorpius thinks for a long moment before turning to face him and leading him out of the room. Crais bitinglly says that he has orders to recapture *Moya* and its passengers, but Scorpius tells him that Crichton has vital information, and until he gets it, he won't be released. Crais orders Scorpius to give Crichton up. Sure, that'll work. Scorpius notes that Crais's adherence to orders is "selective," and that he's repeatedly ignored orders to return to First Command. The two of them bicker a bit, but Scorpius stands firm, and asks Crais, since he knows Crichton so well, what would persuade Crichton to stop resisting the chair. I'd say a massage function, but I don't think that's quite what he meant.

Gilina discovers Crichton's location, and thinks she might be able to patch into it... ... and we cut to her voice coming over a speaker in Crichton's cell. She instructs him to keep his back to the wall camera, and mentions that she bypassed the audio on the monitoring station. Crichton tells Chiana where he stashed the "tissue gizmo." Hey, that's what I was going to call it! Then I thought that might be dumbing things down too much, but I guess it's no surprise that Crichton came to my rescue on that front. He tells Chiana to get the sample back to *Moya*. Gilina protests that they have to rescue him, but he's not having that, and further discussion is ended by a noise outside the cell. The door opens, and it's Crais, causing Crichton to giggle. I certainly don't blame him for that one.

Chiana's wondering, out loud but half to herself, how she's going to escape without getting shot down. Gilina is still floored that Crichton isn't going to try to save himself, and asks Chiana if Aeryn really means that much to him. Chiana, sizing up the situation typically quickly and accurately, says that Aeryn is just a shipmate to him, and that Crichton is in love with Gilina. "Why do you think he's staying?" I know I'm probably not in the first million men to say this, but the girl is *good*. She tells Gilina that once Aeryn's cured, they'll come back with reinforcements and retrieve them both. Probably best not to mention Rygel here. Gilina convinces herself to believe what Chiana's telling her, and gets to work on Chiana's escape.

-- Page 13 --

Crais: "You are dead, Crichton." Crichton's even more off his game than I thought, as he misses the most obvious "then I must be in hell" response. Crais goes on, though, in his most reasonable tone, that he's recaptured *Moya*, and if Crichton cooperates, he'll spare the prisoners' lives. Crichton plays along for the moment and asks what that would entail, and Scorpius pipes up that Crichton has to stop resisting the Aurora

Chair. Crichton complains that that's not a very good option. Crais: "You are not in a very good position." Score one for the insane military commander. No, the *other* one. Crichton, thinking now, asks if the prisoners are all "in perfect health," and Crais agrees that is the case. Crichton: "Fetch the comfy chair." Hee, sweet, a *Python* reference! Not as good as if Ben Browder were to sing the lumberjack song, but I'll take it.

Gilina tells Chiana that she's programmed a blind spot into the targeting system, and if Chiana follows the prescribed trajectory, she won't be seen. What's more, she'll provide a diversion so she can get to the Prowler. Chiana asks for a four-hundred-microt head start, and Gilina sends her on her way.

Stark is hauled out of the Aurora room, babbling as usual. Of course, Scorpius was with Crichton and Crais just now, so it seems like Niem was doing some freelance work there. I can't tell you how much that doesn't disturb me. Niem fires the old girl up. Cool shot of Chiana from the gizmo's POV. She fake-clumsily barrels up to a nearby Peace-trooper, prompting him to shove her to the floor in disgust. While she's down there, she grabs the gizmo while haltingly apologizing, and he sends her on her way. Elsewhere, Gilina counts down the last few microts, and then initiates a (presumably fake) reactor overload, complete with evacuation warning. Elsewhere, right by where the Prowler is parked, Javio barks at people to clear the area and get everyone away from the reactor core. Chiana approaches from behind him and, trying to keep her cover up, babbles some bullshit story about needing to have a look at the Prowler. Javio isn't fooled, however, and turns imperiously to look at her. Sure enough, that impression you left on him seems to have had a downside here, my dear. He approaches her slowly and then pulls his gun on her, and she drops the act: "I thought the Commander was meant to be the *last* one to evacuate!" Javio tells her that he's more of a self-preservationist. She offers to leave with him, so they can "continue [their] earlier discussion," but Javio is over that idea. She then kicks his hand to the side, but he knocks her in the face. She's unfazed, and takes minimal cover behind a nearby gas tank, which she uncaps as he fires, causing the gas to ignite. She then tilts the tank toward him and spectacularly immolates him. She looks pleased with herself as she regards his charred corpse. Might have done better on those backwater planets after all, dude. Chiana moves for the Prowler as we head into the last break.

-- Page 14 --

We get a shot of the Prowler returning safely to *Moya* (Chiana did mention earlier that she knew how to fly it, in case you were wondering) and then we cut to an ashen Aeryn coming to with everyone gathered around her in a *Wizard Of Oz*-like tableau. They don't pay further homage to that scene, though, probably because there's no dream she could have been having stranger than her reality. Zhaan injects her with the hypo as D'Argo and a still-bewigged Chiana watch nervously. Aeryn asks what that was, and Zhaan tells her that Crichton succeeded in obtaining the tissue sample. Aeryn murmurs that she's not going to die. D'Argo: "As [you once said to me](#), you will die, but not today." Yeah, I think I covered that already. Aeryn asks if he's sure, as -- referencing Chiana's appearance -- she's starting to hallucinate. "You make a worse Peacekeeper than Crichton." That would be really insulting if it were remotely true. Chiana, sincerely happy to the point of almost bursting, tells Aeryn she's glad she's okay. Aeryn says she wants to see Crichton, but D'Argo neatly tells her that she will,

soon. Chiana and Zhaan leave, but D'Argo stays with her, "just in case." He puts his hand in hers, and wow. I'm tearing up here. Aeryn Sun, never alone again. We can only hope. She takes a long moment and thanks him, and that's all you need to know about whether she actually wanted to die in solitude.

As Crichton is being tortured some more, Niem informs Scorpius that the reactor alert was a false alarm. Heskon appears and tells Scorpius about the unauthorized Prowler launch and the lack of sensor readings; Scorpius realizes that Crichton may have multiple accomplices, and cranks up the chair again as he declares that Crichton will reveal their identities. Crichton screams again before we get the "To Be Continued" card.

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<http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/show/farscape/the-hidden-memory/>

## - A Kiss Before Dying -

-- Page 1 --

Establishing shot of *Moya*. Rygel barks, "Why the *yotz* are we still here?" He says they should starburst away before Crais finds them, but Pilot informs him that starburst isn't available, nor is propulsion. "We will be fortunate just to maintain orbit." In other words: Shut the *yotz* up, Rygel. Zhaan, panicked, says she thought *Moya* was prepared to starburst once more, but Pilot informs her of the concept of linear time, and goes on that *Moya* is now in full labor, and in addition, she's very frightened. Zhaan tells him that's a natural reaction during a birthing cycle, but Pilot replies that *Moya* has told him that this birthing cycle is anything but natural, and she's now convinced something's wrong with her child. "It is not a normal Leviathan." Zhaan and Rygel look at each other. Have fun letting your imaginations run wild with that one, kids!

Aeryn, looking much better, comes to, and takes a silver cup from a smiling Zhaan. She claims to be feeling better as D'Argo and a back-to-normal Chiana enter. Aeryn smiles that she hears she has Chiana to thank for her life, but Chiana mentions that Gilina had a hand in the effort as well. Aeryn remembers her, and then asks where Crichton is. After some attempt at distraction from Zhaan, D'Argo lays it out: "Crichton's still on the Gammak base. He's been captured by the Peacekeepers. They're probing his mind using something called an Aurora Chair." Geez, D'Argo, way to leave out the part where *Moya*'s losing orbit and you're probably all going to plunge into a gas giant and die. Just because Aeryn almost died is no reason to sugarcoat things! Aeryn, eyes bugging out, asks why no one's gone after Crichton, but D'Argo tells her there are hundreds of Peacekeepers down there, and he can't infiltrate the base without being detected. Aeryn: "Well, I can." She painfully rolls out of bed...  
...and we cut to her suited up, walking down a corridor, as D'Argo falls into step beside her. She tells him not to try to stop her, but he says he's joining her: "If you can be an idiot, I can be an idiot." That's enough of a popular sentiment around here that they should really set it to music. Zhaan is coming too, as she thinks she can help Crichton if the chair damages him. Aeryn expresses her hope that Crichton will be strong enough to fight the chair...

...and he's presumably still doing that. [Furrow](#). Wormhole stuff with Aeryn and Crichton. The machine flips off, and Crais yells that there's no use resisting. "The chair will rip the memories from you, even if you fight it." I'd wonder if he's speaking from theory or experience here, but that question isn't going to be relevant for very much longer. Crichton struggles to bite out that he's not resisting, but Niem informs them that the chair thinks otherwise, so Crais hisses for her to increase the extraction level. More memories, and then a bit of vomit from Crichton. Well, Crais did ask for more extraction. The memory bits continue. Crichton says he's not blocking anything "about wormholes," which is a bit of truth I'm surprised he gave up, but maybe the vomit-inducing levels of pain are starting to get to him a little. Scorpius looks pensive as we head into the credits.

-- Page 2 --

Crichton's lying on the floor of his cell, shivering and barely conscious, as The Music Of Help From Unlikely Places, or Stark's Theme Music (shorter and therefore preferable) plays. We hear a metallic clicking, and Crichton opens his eyes. Seeing Stark at the door with his back to him, he asks what he's doing. I'd be wary of asking that question in this situation, but I did recap quite a few episodes of [Oz](#). Stark gets all squirrely about how there's no talking to him, and how he does all his talking in the Chair. We see Stark put something he was holding into an opening in the floor, an action not missed by Crichton, who crawls over and asks if Stark is there to spy on him for "Scorpy." If Crichton already feels close enough to Scorpius to call him by this diminutive nickname, I can hardly wait to hear how he's referring to him by the time Season Three rolls around. Crichton tries to grab the thing Stark was holding, but Stark tosses him away. They size each other up like two lovers who just had their first fight, and I just won't say anything more about that, and then Crichton opines, "You're not crazy." Stark drops the manic act and says that's true, but "if they think I am, they don't bother me so much." I hate to point this out, Stark, but by your own imminent admission, you've been in the chair over a hundred times. If nothing else, that seems like a "bother" inasmuch as the experience must be getting awfully humdrum. Crichton asks what he's hiding, and a tear incongruously slides down Stark's cheek as he smiles, "My baby." He rushes over to Crichton and shows him a device he calls a "magnetic crypt encoder," which he fashioned from scraps of metal he's been collecting for two cycles. Good news: If he gets the sequence right, it will unlock the door. Bad news: It can only try one sequence at a time. I have no idea how many digits or characters are in the code, but from Crichton's incredulous dismissal of the gadget, I'm guessing it's a lot. Still, as our states are fond of telling poor people about the lottery: You gotta be in it to win it. Stark is unbowed, and goes over to the door, but rushes back and asks Crichton: "You'll tell them about my baby, won't you?" Crichton says no; he's kept things from them thus far, and he can keep this. Stark informs him that everyone can block thoughts for a time, but he will eventually cave. "I'm the only one who can block thoughts forever." I suppose that's only fair, given how long it's going to take that magnetic gizmo to work. Crichton asks how many times Stark's been in the chair, and when Stark tells him the over-one-hundred number to which I alluded above, he shudders involuntarily. He asks again what Stark is hiding, but Stark turns the question around, so Crichton tells him that what he's blocking has



nothing to do with wormholes. Odd place to cut out of the scene, given that we already knew that.

-- Page 3 --

A transport leaves *Moya*. On board, Aeryn tries to steady her shaking right hand. Zhaan notices and asks if she's okay, but Aeryn brushes off her concern and asks D'Argo if there's any sign they've been spotted. D'Argo tells her that the scanning blind Gilina created seems to be holding. Since Scorpius was made aware at least of the existence of the blind at the end of the last episode, this seems off to me, but I suppose Scorpius has been a little distracted, with Crais clomping around like a great paunchy ponytailed bull. Aeryn tells Zhaan that there won't be any sensors on top, as they'd give away the existence of the base. Okay, we'll go with that. They land.

Gilina's voice cuts into Crichton's cell. Stark gets all wiggy, but Crichton tells him to shut up, and turns to the camera. Gilina has to remind him to turn around again, and his forgetfulness is certainly understandable. Gilina updates him on what she knows, which is that Chiana got off the base, and Crichton, in obvious pain, tells her he needs her to keep them "off his back" for a while. Personally, I don't think we've seen nearly enough of Crichton *on* his back, but Gilina surprisingly doesn't share my opinion as she says she'll think of something. She tells him not to worry, but after she signs off, she looks plenty concerned herself.

*Moya*. As the ship shakes, Rygel and Chiana are trying to research something, presumably pregnancy procedures, as Pilot tells them *Moya* thinks getting the offspring out as quickly as possible would be advisable. I keep saying this, but: If she *only* knew. Pilot suggests some technobabbly solution, and Rygel co-signs it, and then exoposits that while he's conceived hundreds of progeny both official and illegitimate, he wasn't present at any of the births. He does note that their current situation is a little bit different: "My progeny were tiny. Tiny and handsome. Like their father." *Moya's* rumblings intensify, and if she heard that little speech from Rygel, I can hardly blame her.

A bunch of techs are working on the Aurora Chair as Niem snaps that Scorpius wants maximum power, now. I don't know if this little maintenance session is serendipitous or if Gilina did something to create the illusion that it was necessary, but either way, here she is, crawling into a little area underneath the chair and offering to give a male tech, already working away, a hand. She suggests he take care of something outside the tight space, and he agrees, as she's got the superior knowledge. Not that he should feel bad about that, considering she's turning out to be the interstellar version of MacGyver. Once the male tech is gone and she's judged that the coast is clear, she removes one of many cylindrical cartridges embedded in the ceiling of the small space and switches it out for one she brought with her. She hides the original one in her jumpsuit as the lead technician calls that the calibration is complete, just as Scorpius and Crais enter the room. Gilina emerges from underneath the chair at that moment, and for a second I was worried that Crais would recognize her, but I suppose it's in character that he wouldn't. Scorpius and Crais lead a party to go retrieve Crichton, and Gilina takes the opportunity to get the hell out of there...

-- Page 4 --

...but her chores aren't done, as we cut to her back in the alcove from which she's been doing most of her work. Breathless, she patches back in and calls to Crichton.

He tells her there's company at the door, and the scene becomes nail-biting as she instructs him, when he gets into the chair, not to block the memory of their kiss on the *Zelbinion*. Crichton recoils, as that's the one thing he's been hiding, but she urgently tells him to trust her. Stark runs interference at the door, buying them a couple more seconds for her to reiterate her command, but then Crais gut-punches him a couple of times and tosses him aside like a rag doll. Officially? Reprehensible. Unofficially? *Re-wind*. Scorpius enters and, deliciously deliberately, asks Crais, "Have you finished?" The answer is yes, and Scorpius conversationally tells Crichton, "This is what I'm trying to keep you from!" Hee. Two Peace-troopers haul Crichton to his feet, and Scorpius tells him that if he stops blocking the chair, he won't torture him anymore. Crichton denies blocking anything, though, so after some conversation that feels slightly like rather tasty filler, Scorpius instructs his minions to bring Crichton. Chair. After a few warm-up memories, we see Crichton's whole [intimate interaction with Gilina](#) in "PK Tech Girl." We focus in on them making out, with Gilina's back to us. But then things change: Crais appears, and tells Crichton he's glad he's enjoying his stay with "[them]." Gilina turns -- but it's not her; it's a different blonde woman in a tech uniform. Crais calls a halt as Crichton sniggers and Scorpius and Niem are like, "Awkward." And when you've got the king and queen of bondage outfits saying that, it's a socially embarrassing situation indeed. Niem resumes the extraction of the false memory, and therein, Crais thanks Crichton. He explains a truckload of information we know to be true from the *Maldis* episode -- he was a conscript, and even though he rose through Peacekeeper ranks on "wits and hatred," some doors were always closed to him. (That speech is going by so fast I couldn't even pause to make a "half right" comment.) Crais finishes up by producing a chip and intoning, "With this wormhole information you've given me, I now have the power to rise where I should be." Aptly put -- up shit's creek is both where you're going and where you belong. Crais, starting to panic, says that Crichton made that up, but Scorpius evenly says that that's impossible. Crais tries punching Crichton, earning him another delectably contemptuous look from Scorpius, and then Crichton, his brain catching up, asks Crais if the game is up. He tells Scorpius that Crais learned of the existence of wormholes when Crichton arrived from his galaxy. "I gave him the information disk in exchange for my life." Of course, were this true, the flaw is that I don't think Crais would have stuck to the agreement and let Crichton live. He may be many things, but apart from the midsection, he's not soft. Crais chokes Crichton into the commercial break.

-- Page 5 --

We return with Crais, by hook or by crook, off Crichton's neck. Crichton is still in the chair, and Crais, two of his crew, Niem, and Scorpius are standing before him as Scorpius asks if Crais is contending that nothing they saw in Crichton's mind was true. Crais claims that is the case, but is then forced to admit that the information about his background was accurate. He suggests Crichton stole it from a database, and when Scorpius points out that that would have been a neat trick to pull off from his cell, Crais snaps that he doesn't know how he did it, but the alleged conspiracy still isn't the truth. Scorpius: "Of course it's not." Crais's heart rate: dropping. "But there's only one way to be sure it is a lie." Crais's heart rate: rising. This is a new way to do interval training. Scorpius says that Crais will have to go in the chair. Crais: "No

Captain has ever been subjected to such an indignity." Scorpius blithely replies that there's always a first for everything. Unfortunate for Crais that Scorpius's very existence predisposed him to believe that bit of pithy wisdom. Scorpius orders Crichton to be brought back to his cell, and then Crais tells Scorpius he hasn't "got the numbers" to put him in the chair. Scorpius goes tactical, telling Crais's minions that he commends their loyalty. "It must be difficult to maintain for an officer like Crais." Hee. He goes on that his authority on a Gammak base is unconditional, and Crais will go to the chair. Even the psycho Don Quixote of this galaxy knows that this battle is lost. I hope they at least pull his hair back in case he vomits.

Atop the base, in what looks like the ruins of a village, D'Argo returns to Zhaan and asks, "What are you doing with those explosives?" Not the first time she's heard that, I'll bet. Proving my point, she says she's "upgrading these primitive things." Aeryn appears and says she's found an access shaft, so she should be able to get down to the base and search for Crichton...

...and we cut to her reaching down to open it. Her hand shakes, and she grabs it with the other and tells it to stop. Seriously, hand. That's a good way to lose...yourself. She opens it and rushes down many, many levels to the bottom. Warily, she exits the stairs and moves down an unpopulated corridor.

Cell. Crichton is happily, if on the verge of crazily, telling Stark, who's sitting right next to him, about Gilina's exploits. Stark tells him to rest. Crichton shakily says he's got to get the door open, but when he tries to move, he collapses into Stark's lap. Stark touches him tenderly, and then removes his mask to reveal a bright light shining out of the entire area that the mask covered. Crichton looks at it in wonder, and asks what Stark just showed him. Stark: "I'm able to give a few thoughts, that's all." Not to ruin the moment, but if you're a need-based donor, you've come to the right place. A tear streams down Crichton's cheek in some nice symmetry, and Stark strokes Crichton's hair in a way that just will break your heart. Crichton, calmer now, asks Stark how long he's been there, and the answer is two cycles. He goes on that the Peacekeepers killed most of his people, but they kept him alive because he interests them. "I'm able to hide thoughts that their chair can't touch. It's almost ironic -- what made me a slave now keeps me alive." Crichton asks for clarification, and Stark points to his mask as the thing that caused his slavery. "I'm of the Banik slave race. Outsiders think that we do not feel, but it's only that our feelings don't always show." So the WASPs have their own planet in this galaxy. He goes on that just as the mask can hide their feelings, they're able to cloud thoughts from their minds. "What I know deep inside, Peacekeepers will never see."

-- Page 6 --

Nice cut to everything deep inside Crais being forcibly and painfully extracted.

Scorpius focuses in on Crais's father, and asks who he is. Crais tells him the truth, and begs him to turn the machine off. That's not happening, as Niem reports that he's hiding something. Scorpius smiles at Crais's pain.

Aeryn makes her way into a populated hallway. A Peace-trooper salutes her deferentially, which pleases her. Not in the "Ooh, I remember that fondly" way that would squick you out, though.

Gilina packs up her case and heads out of the room she first led Crichton and Chiana to. As she walks out, though, a hand reaches out and presses her against the wall.

The voice attached to the hand asks if there's surveillance in the cell, and when Gilina answers negatively, Aeryn reveals herself. She enters and takes a seat, undoubtedly exhausted from all the effort, and thanks Gilina for saving her life. Gilina, perhaps feeling strange about getting gratitude from her suspected romantic rival, asks Aeryn what she's doing there, as her recovery should have taken at least ten days. Aeryn duhs that she didn't have that time to spare, and quickly ascertains where Crichton is. She gets up to go, but Gilina sits her back down and tells her there's no way to get to him without a direct order from Scorpius. Gilina goes on to inform Aeryn about Crichton's memory games, and tells her that when Scorpius learns for sure that Crichton has no knowledge of wormholes, he'll kill him. I can only wonder how many times in the future Crichton will wish it had turned out that simply.

Zhaan and D'Argo continue their work of planting explosives and hiding them under rocks to counter the Peacekeepers potentially coming up through "the level risers." Zhaan then says she always wanted to ask him about his Qualta blade, as for a warrior, it seems a "very unconventional weapon." Perhaps, but for a lion with tentacles all over his face, it couldn't be more fitting. D'Argo tells her that many cycles ago, there was a race worse than the Peacekeepers, called the "Teloks." They laid siege to the Luxan home world for over a hundred days, and when the final assault came, all the Luxans had were Qualta blades. "My own great-grandfather died in that war. When the final days come, Luxans believe that the Qualta blade will lead us to freedom." Zhaan says she understands, and apologizes for her curiosity, which seems odd, since I didn't get any sense from D'Argo that he was offended by the question. D'Argo tells her that there's one other thing: "My Qualta blade and I can cut stones for you." Zhaan looks at him all, "I don't know that you needed to be that grand about it, but sure, knock yourselves out."

-- Page 7 --

Somehow, Aeryn has duped Heskton into taking her to Crichton's cell with a story about an unauthorized magnetic pulse, which she says she detected from Crais's ship. In reality, I'm not sure if Gilina was listening when Stark told Crichton about it, or if she scanned it herself, or what. I'm not going to dwell on it, though, because thanks to that stupid paraphoral nerve, it's been far too long since Aeryn's gotten to kick some ass. Anyway, Heskton detects Stark's gizmo, he and Aeryn go inside, and Heskton tosses Stark aside to get to the thing. Stark, apparently not in on the plan, freaks shit on Crichton, but before things can get out of hand, Aeryn knocks Heskton out with her rifle. YES! Stark is befuddled, and asks, "How many Peacekeepers do you know on this base?" Hee. Crichton and Aeryn exchange a nice moment (Aeryn says she's "better now," how cute is that) and then the three of them are out of there. Scorpius finally gets to Crais's hidden memory: [his murder of Lieutenant Teeg](#). Scorpius languidly notes that that's why Crais was fighting so hard, but the bad news is that all barriers are now broken, meaning that the scene between Crais and Crichton was in fact a fabrication. Just then, alarms go off, and Scorpius is informed that Crichton has escaped, aided by a Peacekeeper. Scorpius orders the base to be sealed. "He must not reach the surface."

Gilina has joined Aeryn, Stark, and Crichton, and the four of them are running for the stairs to the surface. Aeryn sends Stark in, but then Gilina sees Niem and some Peacekeepers coming for them, so Aeryn tells Stark to go, and the three of them run

off in another direction. It's a little confusing here, because it's not made obvious that they were actually seen, so aborting their escape wasn't clearly necessary. But let's just blame the editing and move on. Gilina leads Aeryn and Crichton to a grate in the floor, which they remove. They hide in the space below and replace the grate just ahead of Niem catching up to their position. Flummoxed, she tells her men to keep searching. She lingers for a moment, standing right on top of them, but then leaves. This doesn't say much for her species' sense of smell, because I'd wager Crichton is in *dire* need of a shower.

*Moya*. Pilot gives Rygel and Chiana the unfortunate news that in order to give birth, *Moya* must create a vacuum in her interior, and it's going to happen in only eighteen microts. He invites them to his den, but Chiana grits that they can't reach him in that amount of time. Pilot then points them to pressure tanks in Maintenance Bay Six. "I suggest you go. Go now!" When *Pilot* isn't mincing words, it's probably best to obey. Cut to Chiana making it to the bay, only to find that the first pressure tank she tries is locked. Rygel pops out from the other one with a skeevy smile and says there's plenty of room in that one. If another tiny handsome progeny is the result of this development, I *really* don't want to know about it. Chiana is not thrilled, to say the least, but she climbs in and shuts the door.

-- Page 8 --

Gilina is just returning from doing a little recon, and she reports that the Peacekeepers are sealing all the access shafts. "It means they're shutting down everything." To move anywhere in the base, they'll need an ident chip from a senior officer. Crichton starts to move to "go bag a senior officer," but Aeryn informs him she'll be the one handling that errand. She checks to make sure the coast is clear and heads off. In the Tank of Chiana's Discontent, the following exchange: "What is *that*?" "What?" "*That*." I'll let you figure who said what. Chiana moves to a less hands-on position vis-à-vis Rygel, and asks Pilot how *Moya* is. Pilot says he can see the baby coming, and signs off just as Rygel cuts one. And I get to recap another round of [Happy Helium Fun Times](#), the highlight of which is Chiana chirping, "You're disgusting!" But *hilarious*. *Moya* lurches at that moment, and we get a look at the baby inside her. I'm sure you won't feel too spoiled if I tell you that Pilot's report of it being abnormal seems not to be wrong.

Oh, man, this is the best scene, and it's been a long time coming. Aeryn warily enters the Aurora Chamber and sees Crais still in the chair. She huskily says his name, but he can't swivel his head to look at her, and he doesn't recognize her voice. She sees the image of Crais killing Teeg still on the monitor, and when she calls him on it, he asks who she is. Aeryn: "I am irreversibly contaminated." Crais, you might not have thought it possible, but your day is about to get worse. Aeryn moves to stand in front of him, and he rumbles her name. She gets in his face, and he, appallingly, reminds her of the blood oath she took to obey her commanding officer. She emotionally tells him that the oath no longer has any meaning for her, as he destroyed everything she had. "Do you know what I learned while I was away from you? Everything I lost isn't worth a damn, and I don't want to go back to your past." "Good for her" doesn't even begin to cover it, but I'll say it anyway. She rips off his ident chip and says he will never order her again, so he threatens her: "I will track you down and kill you, Officer Sun." Because he's been doing a bang-up job with the hunting down so far this series.

She tells him that she's giving him something: his life. And it did take me a second to realize her meaning, but it's clear as she heads for the control panel: "I will make you watch your life." She flips every switch on the panel, and Crais cries out in agony. We then see Aeryn outside the room, impassively making her escape, as Crais's repeated screams echo down the corridor. *Awesome.*

-- Page 9 --

Crichton wonders what's keeping Aeryn. Unfortunately, this gives Gilina the opening to discuss the elephant in the crawlspace, and she asks Crichton if he wants to be with Aeryn. Crichton gives an inappropriate laugh and asks if they can talk about the subject another time, but Gilina tells him that if he wants her to go with him and give up everything she knows, he's got to be straight with her. Crichton doesn't say anything, and then Aeryn returns to let him off the hook. She reports that she ran into an old friend, and Crichton leads the way to head for the exit. But Gilina lingers and poses the question to Aeryn, now: Does she want to be with Crichton? Aeryn is more respectful than Crichton, saying that whatever Gilina and Crichton have been discussing is none of her business, but Gilina says that she can't go with them if Crichton is in love with Aeryn. Over Aeryn's protests and admonitions that she at least tell Crichton herself, she says she'll be fine, and takes off. I wonder what the Sebacean idiom for "holding the bag" is.

Niem and Scorpius are by Crais's side, and at least they've turned the machine off. Niem reports the escapee's use of the ident chip, and says they're climbing the air vent to the surface. She offers to burn them out, but Scorpius nixes that, as they need Crichton alive. "We'll take the level risers and beat them to the surface." Good plan -- charge!

Aeryn rejoins Crichton at the entrance to the stairs and breaks the news about Gilina. He has the gall to ask what Aeryn said to her, and maybe we'll all give him a pass here with what he went through, but if I were Aeryn, I'd make a mental note that I owe him a light slap in the face. Crichton starts to double back, but Aeryn firmly tells her that they don't have time for this, and it's what Gilina wants. She gets the door open, and they move.

Heskon leads a team of Peace-troopers down a corridor. Once they're past, Gilina appears from hiding and looks conflicted.

In the pressure tank, Rygel's hand smacks up against the fogged-up window, *Titanic*-style. Hee. And [he paints](#), too! Chiana screeches Pilot's name, still in helium voice. I am so easy to please. He reports that they're repressurized, so she tumbles out. Rygel starts to apologize for something -- "I didn't mean to..." -- but she squeaks for him to shut up. God. Whatever he did, it must have been pretty bad if he's actually feeling stirrings of shame.

-- Page 10 --

The two of them are back in Command as Pilot reports that a portion of the offspring can't get clear of *Moya*'s external vent. He gets a closer visual, which he makes available to Chiana and Rygel, and they're all horrified, as the child ship is covered in weapons. It's going to be no mean feat to get this kid to eat his vegetables.

We return to another shot of the small ship. Back on Command, Pilot explains via Clamshell Cam that when [D'Argo broke the contraception wall half a cycle earlier](#), the Peacekeeper catalyst he released must have contained a DNA signature that resulted



in the production of weapons. He adds that the child may grow to be bigger than *Moya*, and he doesn't know who will control him -- *Moya* or the Peacekeepers. However, there's a more pressing problem -- *Moya*'s birthing channel wasn't designed for this manner of offspring, so it's stuck, and panicking and starting to charge its way forward. The upshot is he may try to blast his way out of *Moya*. (Makes you wonder if that was the Peacekeepers' plan all along, doesn't it?) Chiana, once again stepping up, asks Pilot if he can force an atmosphere she can breathe into the vent, and the answer is yes, so she offers to climb down the internal shaft and "cut a seam" so the child can get itself free. I know we're in a hurry here, but I still think *Moya* would appreciate it if you stick to the old "measure twice, cut once" bit of wisdom. Chiana takes off.

Crichton and Aeryn reach the surface, and D'Argo tells Crichton it's good too see him again. Stark and Zhaan are there as well, and I can only imagine the awkward conversation that must have occurred when the Phantom of the Gammak Base arrived up top. They move, but when we shift to a quick aerial view, we hear Peacekeeper voices nearby. The two groups are engaged in a firefight soon enough. It seems kind of lucky or overly convenient that our heroes even have a weapon for Stark, but we'll overlook that. Also, the Peace-troopers have the stereotypically poor aim of anyone involved in a shoot-out with the main stars of any entertainment vehicle. We'll overlook that as well. Stark and Crichton have been thrown together, and during a pause, Stark asks what Crichton was hiding from the chair. Crichton says it was just about the time he kissed a girl. The two of them giggle into taking a few shots.

Chiana has reached the child, and tries to figure out her course of action.

-- Page 11 --

The firefight continues. Crichton turns Stark's question around, and the answer is the memory of a place he saw when he was a boy. Crichton: "Must have been one hell of a place." I'd imagine, yes. D'Argo tosses a charge the Peacekeepers' way, which detonates to their disadvantage.

Chiana reports that she's unable to make the cut. Pilot tells her that *Moya* is trying to control the child, but his weapon is primed to fire. Chiana has an idea -- let the weapon fire on a low blast level. Pilot's unsure, but Chiana says it's the only way, as if they don't get the kid out, he'll destroy *Moya*'s bulkhead.

Zhaan, D'Argo, and Aeryn make it to a position of relative safety. Crichton sticks an explosive on a support beam, and he and Stark move before the charge explodes. Chiana's trying to get to safety before the weapon fires. She makes it back into one of *Moya*'s corridors just in time to avoid getting her ass burned off. She muses, "*That* was a low-level blast?" Heh. Pilot reports success -- the child is free, and *Moya* is okay. For someone who just gave birth to the Death Star, that is.

Crichton, last of his party, backs right into Scorpius. However, Gilina appears and points a pulse rifle at him. Crichton gloatingly smiles and tells Gilina to shoot him, but she hesitates, and Scorpius plugs her right in the gut. Crichton knocks Scorpius away, but misses a very clear shot at him, so he escapes. Crichton picks up Gilina as D'Argo and Stark return to them, and the group makes its escape. Later, Scorpius slowly walks through the wreckage. His expression is inscrutable, but that could be all the makeup.

Pilot is telling the crew, minus Crichton and Zhaan, that before she left the base, Gilina scrambled the scanning data files; even Crais's carrier won't be able to find them now. The bad news is that they can't starburst with the child, and in fact won't be able to travel very far at all. Aeryn asks how Gilina is. Pilot: "Not good." He reports that *Moya's* child is all right, and a male. D'Argo: "What kind of a beast is he?" The kind that's covered in Peacekeeper colors and is built not to take shit from anyone, if the cut to the viewscreen is any indication.

Crichton is at Gilina's side, telling her to lie still and let Zhaan's medicine do its work, she'll be fine in a little while. She asks him to stop with the lies. Crichton: "I'm not lying." You're doing it again. She tells him that she came back because she had to help him, and that Aeryn was right -- if she'd stayed, she would have been discovered. They would have "found out that I love you." She gasps in pain, and Crichton says Zhaan's name, but she can only give a helpless grimace. Stark's voice cuts in, asking if he can help. He sits at the edge of Gilina's bed, asks if he can give her something, and stretches his hand over her face. "It's a place I once saw. I've been carrying it with me for a very long time." Ooh, is it [Everwood](#)? Maybe, as Gilina, apparently seeing it, says it's beautiful. He tells her not to let go of it, and he and Zhaan leave the room. Her voice now reduced to a whisper, Gilina asks if he thinks, if things had been different, if he could have loved her. Crichton is ready not to hesitate on this one as he manages a smile and a yes. She asks him to kiss her one more time. Crichton's barely holding back the tears, but he obliges her. No offense to Stark, but *that's* the thing I wouldn't let go of. By the time he breaks the contact, she's gone. Sniff. I know her story had nowhere to go, but this is still pretty sad. I mean, the love of this girl's life shows up, and she ends up saving *his* love interest's life and dying herself. No wonder the Peacekeepers don't believe in that love shit. Crichton looks reasonably devastated, and we're out.

-- Page 12 --

The episodes that changed everything! How they did not disappoint.

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<http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/show/farscape/bone-to-be-wild/>

## - Pray For Osteoporosis -

-- Page 1 --

I hope someone lost his job for this. No, not the episode, although it's certainly down there, but the title. "*Bone To Be Wild*"? They couldn't have ditched the pun and gone with the semi-ironic "Bad To The Bone" or even the more on-the-nose "The Bone Collector" (like some people I could mention did)? I am a difficult person to offend, but seriously: *Fired*.

Establishing shot of *Moya* in an asteroid field. In Command, everyone (save Zhaan, who seems unaffected) is bundled up as Pilot, in a hushed voice, tells them the Peacekeeper scan is directly over them. Exposition ensues that the scan is attuned to energy, which is why they've shut down all heat sources at the moment. Who could have known Crichton's looks could turn out to be a curse? D'Argo notes that it's not a simple Marauder chasing them, but Crais's full Command Carrier. One might imagine that things aboard said ship would be a little strained after Crais's crew kind of consented to have him put in the Aurora Chair, but then again, given that the chair

seemed to be set in the vicinity of "puree," some gaps in his memory do seem to be a logical result. Chiana says that if no one else will ask, she will: How come Zhaan isn't shivering her ass off like the rest of them? Zhaan explains that her body temperature self-regulates under most conditions. I wish she'd said that blue-skinned creatures have a natural imperviousness to cold, just to see if anyone would have been gullible enough to buy it. Besides Crichton, who doesn't know what "gullible" even means since they took it out of the dictionary.

After an impressive pan up to look at the very large Command Carrier, Pilot informs the others that *Moya* is picking something up -- a distress call from one of the surrounding asteroids. Pilot manages to isolate it, and we see an alien woman telling the crew that she and her family are under attack. She doesn't add that her attackers apparently forced her to wear a Princess Leia "hair"-style made entirely of light bulbs, but that will be readily apparent if you can grab a screencap somewhere. The woman warns of a creature, which just then seems to arrive, snarling at the terrified woman. I'd try to describe it, but that's going to prove difficult enough even with a much clearer look later on. The transmission ends, and Crichton wonders if it could be a Peacekeeper trick, but D'Argo is able to confirm Pilot's assessment that the message came from an asteroid close by. Pilot adds that the signal is so weak that it's unlikely Crais's ship even heard it, and Aeryn points out that they won't be able to escape the asteroid field without some kind of navigational aid, and maybe the "girl" and her family have charts. Rygel can't believe that they're considering visiting the asteroid. D'Argo: "You do not have to go down there, Your Flatulence." That's good -- he does sound pretty aghast. ("Bone To Be Wild" guy? Now we're even.) Chiana points out that someone is actually asking them for help, and Crichton cottons on and starts giggling: "How stupid is *that*?" That's actually a pretty complex calculation, so go ahead and mull it over through the opening credits.

-- Page 2 --

But speaking of which, don't forget to notice that Gigi Edgley is in them for the first time. Yay!

Crais is looking at some charts, which he throws at an underling in frustration. No stranger to that emotion, the underling patiently tells him that there are over 20,000 asteroids of sufficient size to block *Moya* from their scans, and if they were to enter the field to get a better look, they'd sacrifice their maneuverability. Scorpius enters and languidly tells Crais he has an idea he may not have considered. "Do you think a mother would abandon her child?" I'm not usually going to be one to question Scorpius's tactics, but using the concept of parental fidelity to get through to Crais is an approach that wouldn't have occurred to me. Nevertheless, he goes on that bombarding the area with discordant stimuli such as "multi-frequency signals" might cause the younger Leviathan to reveal himself, and his mother along with him. Crais, however, looks as likely to adopt Scorpius's suggestion as he is to appear as a spokesman for Herbal Essences, and tells the underling to take them into the field. Scorpius doesn't speak, but the creaking of his leather mask as he tilts his head in frustration sort of says it all.

DRDs scuttle about as Pilot reports the Peacekeeper scan has passed, and we see that Crichton, D'Argo, Zhaan, and Aeryn are preparing to depart for the asteroid. Pilot,

however, somewhat urgently requests for Aeryn to remain aboard, to which she accedes without fanfare. Zhaan suggests they deactivate their comms for safety. Cut to the very lush asteroid, as D'Argo barks, "This is the most miserable place I think I have ever been." Zhaan says that she finds it just the opposite, but as someone who came to the pleasures of seasonal allergies later in life, I'm inclined to agree with Simba Tentacleface there. Crichton is with us as well, saying that his rashes have rashes, but Zhaan assures them that the cure for those ailments and more can be found on the surface. She goes on that there are no animals -- not even insects -- that could compete with the flora. The insect point seems odd, given the revelation later, but I suppose that just means they were never there to begin with. More commentary on D'Argo's sinuses gives way to a growling noise nearby and then a woman screaming, and the three of them take off in pursuit. Crichton reaches the source of the noise first, discovering the girl from the distress call being menaced by a large...thing, who's about to drop a big rock on her. Crichton's blaster shot causes it to miss, however, and it runs off as the terrified girl begs them to protect her. Crichton is the only one she fondles while doing so, and I know that's probably not going to come as a surprise, but I believe in being thorough. Also probably not coming as a surprise to the huge majority of readers is that the girl is played by Francesca Buller, who just so happens to be Ben Browder's real-life wife, and appears later in the series in the roles of ro-NA and Minister Akhna. I mention her marital status in case anyone was feeling sorry for her for having to wear light bulbs on her head. Anyway, the girl, who we can now see has large spikes protruding from her head behind the Princess Leia light bulbs, goes on that the creature killed her family, and D'Argo returns with the news that the thing got away, as it knows the terrain too well. Zhaan tries to soothe the girl, who tells them her name is M'Lee, and while she used to have maps of the asteroid field, they've been destroyed. D'Argo disgustedly suggests they go back to the transport pod, and the girl, who's really giving the damsel-in-distress routine the hard sell, says that if it's not well-guarded, the creature will attack it. D'Argo hoists his Qualta blade with a look that says that's the best news he's heard all day.

-- Page 3 --

Inside, Crichton starts to fire up the drive, only to find the creature is already there. So this thing looks like a large shambling mound with vine-like dreads and a humanoid face, although it's got a second mouth with large teeth just next to its normal symmetrical mouth. It's also quite strong, as it knocks D'Argo's blade away, causing it to fire into the wall, and then overpowers D'Argo before escaping ahead of a blaster shot from Crichton. Crichton gives chase as Zhaan ministers to a surprisingly injured D'Argo, and then when Crichton returns, he reports that the access point is now secure, but that's cold comfort, as D'Argo hit the second fuel pump and Crichton hit the main pressure control, so they're not going anywhere at the moment. Also, D'Argo's sustained a broken *terok*, and I don't know what that is but can definitely conclude that internal bleeding can go along with its breakage. On the plus side, the injuries may help take his mind off all the ragweed in the air. M'Lee looks on, no longer looking so scared. Strange, don't you think?

*Moya*. Aeryn asks Pilot what's wrong. Pilot: "Besides the obvious, a great deal." Hee. Pilot has really grown on me. After expositing what we already know about the baby being a weaponed creation of the Peacekeepers, Pilot confesses that *Moya* is having

difficulty establishing a connection with the child -- he knows he is different, and that knowledge is causing tension between him and his mother. Just wait until he hits puberty! Anyway, the idea here is that, since Aeryn was a Peacekeeper, they'd like her to serve as a sort of liaison between the baby and *Moya*, and Pilot adds that *Moya* gives her permission to go aboard the smaller ship. Aeryn: "But does the baby?" Not really a surprise that she's there with the tough questions, is it?

Cut to the baby's interior, as Aeryn has just arrived and is looking around in wonder at the complex Command center. We pull back out through the viewport and see that the child is still very small compared to his mother. Pilot calls Aeryn's name, and we cut back to the inside of the small ship as he says that he has a "direct laser link" to the child's Command, so there's no danger of their transmissions being intercepted.

Aeryn, full of awe, reports that the ship's Command is a complete synthesis of Leviathan and warship technologies. She then says she needs more light, and in response, a quiet warbling begins, which directs Aeryn to a flashing light on a nearby panel. She hesitantly pushes it, and the full lights on the bridge brilliantly flare up. Of course, it would have been more fun to see Aeryn try to clap the lights on, but that would have been quite a departure from her normal inherent dignity. Pilot tells Aeryn that from the outside, it seems like the child has a "sonic ascendancy cannon," and Aeryn confirms that that is the case as she finds its controls. Pilot then suggests Aeryn find the communications array, as that may be the thing the Peacekeepers use to try to locate them. Apparently again led by the child, Aeryn finds the array and reports that it's in silent mode. She then is led to the middle of the room, and quickly discovers that the child is attempting to communicate with her. One senses that this may be a slightly more advanced conversation than the typical "goo goo ga ga" you'd expect from someone of the kid's age.

-- Page 4 --

Crais returns to his quarters to find Scorpius waiting for him. No, I don't think we're going to be seeing any bamp-chicka-wow-wow, although it would be interesting to see them try from a logistical standpoint alone. Scorpius notes that Crais's quarters are "quite opulent" even by captain's standards, and he's never understood the need of some warriors to memorialize their conquests. "Does displaying this decaying flesh remind you of past instances when you were powerful?" Heh. Crais sniffs that the "special privileges" that come with Scorpius's branch of the service don't include disrespect of rank. I guess it's just as well, then, that Scorpius didn't make the obvious follow-up point, which is that if Crais really wants to impress others and himself, he'd probably be well-advised to use something larger than a Hynerian as his trophy.

Scorpius gets down to brass tacks: Crais is a total failure as a captain, and his "vector for success" is quite small; if he strays outside it, he'll find his ship in the hands of a new commander, and also, Crais needs a haircut, like, three years ago. That last bit was added after the door closed, but my hearing is excellent.

Zhaan is sternly forcing D'Argo to swallow an apparently nasty-tasting herb, saying it will stop his internal bleeding. Elsewhere, as Crichton is conducting repairs to the ship, M'Lee tells him that there were originally forty-one in her group, and they intended to colonize the asteroid. Zhaan then sends Crichton out for more of some root; she also catches M'Lee sniffing her and looks suspicious, but M'Lee tells her that she smells like the plant life outside. Zhaan compliments M'Lee on her nose: "I am

also flora." Crichton is befuddled by the news that Zhaan is a plant, but D'Argo bites out that "everyone" knows that Delvians are flora-evolved. I guess this precludes a romance between D'Argo and Zhaan -- there are few surer ways to put a damper on a make-out session than sneezing in your partner's mouth.

Outside, it's now night, and Zhaan is explaining to Crichton that sentient plant life isn't all that uncommon. From the emails I sometimes get, I'm willing to bet she's right. She goes on that she has cartilaginous tissue instead of bone, in case you were wondering if any of this will be Important Later, and then Crichton gets a devilish grin on his face as he notes that her plant status explains why she likes light so much. M'Lee is not so amused, and Crichton asks when the last time she ate was. She curtly tells him she's not hungry yet, and then she hears a noise, and warns that the creature is coming. Crichton tries to get Zhaan back from gathering whatever she's gathering, but M'Lee takes off, and Crichton follows her. When they're gone, Zhaan hears growling nearby, and we soon see the creature in the immediate vicinity. Before he locates Zhaan, however, she closes her eyes and somehow vanishes. The creature comes closer, likely smelling something strange, and as he lingers, Zhaan appears to lose some control over her invisibility trick, and the creature turns and roars at her as she shrieks into the commercial break.

-- Page 5 --

When we return, it's day again, and Crichton and D'Argo are sniping at each other. M'Lee volunteers that the creature will take Zhaan to his "eating grounds" before, you know, eating her. She offers to take Crichton there, and D'Argo agrees that that's a good plan. Then again, he's kind of pissed off at the world right now for a number of reasons, so maybe Crichton should be expecting for this to go pear-shaped even if he doesn't remember this show's normal drill.

Cut to M'Lee leading Crichton to an area with some ugly-looking remains. After telling Crichton that "this is where the eating is done," M'Lee starts groaning, and tells Crichton she's feeling hungry. Spikes pop out all over her body as Crichton remains oblivious, but when the laws of TV finally allow him to look at her, he's horrified. But the shambling mound appears out of nowhere, grabs Crichton's gun, and shoots at M'Lee as she goes running off. He raggedly explains to Crichton that M'Lee is his enemy, and I know I joke about Crichton being dumb rather a lot, but I do think he'd gotten there already.

Scorpius enters Crais's quarters, and we learn that Scorpius countermanded Crais's order to enter the asteroid field. Crais thinks Scorpius has gone too far, and says that if his command were in question, he would have been recalled. But Scorpius points out that he saw in Crais's memories that he was in fact recalled, and is guilty of murder. Crais thinks that when he brings in *Moya*, he'll be cleared of those charges, but Scorpius dismissively tells Crais they won't be changing their course, and leaves. Hard to believe M'Lee's all that hungry with so much filler around.

So now we're in the creature's lair, and, with Zhaan present and safe, he tells Crichton that he would have explained himself earlier, but he finds the atmosphere so thin that the slightest exertion leaves him unable to speak. So...not a skier? Zhaan pipes up that M'Lee is a "calcivore" -- she feeds on bones. One wonders if she's ever tried an alternative form of calcium. I mean, why eat the cow when the milk's so cheap?

Exposition ensues that tells us the creature, who's named Br'nee, is a very



accomplished "botanistic pharmacologist" -- in other words, as Crichton puts it, he uses plants as medicine. Br'nee goes on that his ancestors seeded the then-barren asteroid over three hundred cycles ago, and he led the first team of harvesters, who apparently became fodder for the likes of M'Lee. Also, once M'Lee is full, she reverts to the passive creature she was when they first encountered her, in which state she's apparently vulnerable. They hear M'Lee shrieking in the distance...

-- Page 6 --

...and then Pilot is telling Aeryn that the Peacekeeper scan is heading her way again. Aeryn has trouble getting the child ship to power down, so she sternly tells him that if the Peacekeepers try to contact him, they're not to be listened to, even though they both, in a perverse way, come from the Peacekeepers. She says that he's going to have to decide to trust them -- or to trust her. Pilot, if you want him to trust you as well, I'd suggest not bugging your eyes out quite that far. It's a little creepy. The kid eventually powers down, and Aeryn lets out a relieved sigh, at least according to my closed captioning.

Crichton notes that the howling has stopped, and asks what that means. Br'nee speculates that M'Lee has gone to see if she can make a meal out of D'Argo, so Crichton tells Zhaan to get it in gear. She cheerily chirps that she's almost ready, and Br'nee's herbs and stuff will completely heal D'Argo's injuries. But Br'nee offers her some other plant, which she says she wasn't able to find. He tells her she was looking in the wrong place, and then takes some little seeds and puts them in a machine that somehow unshrinks them, yielding a shrubby large enough to make the Knights Who Say Nee very happy. Zhaan is impressed, and Br'nee explains that his people's capacity to miniaturize the samples was what made it possible to seed the whole planet. They start to go, but Br'nee insists on Crichton staying behind with his weapon to guard the place. Crichton agrees, but when Zhaan's out of earshot, he tells Br'nee that if he's not back in an arn, M'Lee won't be the only one hunting him down. Br'nee, not having met Crichton before, looks baffled at how sexy he managed to make that threat sound. But the threat is irrelevant at the moment, as the second Br'nee and Zhaan are gone, Crichton hears a hissing noise, and soon M'Lee's voice is intoning, "I'm hungry, John!" Crichton wonders if it would be worth sparing his pinky toes to tide her over.

When we return, Crichton and a still-hidden M'Lee have a conversation that goes on entirely too long, the relevant part of which is that M'Lee heard everything Br'nee said about her, and he withheld some of the story. She finally reveals herself and explains that it was Br'nee's ancestors that brought her people to the asteroid, for the purpose of ridding it of all herbivorous life forms. I can't say I understand this -- the absence of insects suggests that Br'nee's ancestors were purposeful in how they brought life to the asteroid. But if that's the case, why have animals there in the first place? The animals couldn't have existed prior to the seeding of the asteroid, right? Anyway, the idea was apparently that M'Lee's people would eat all the animals and then die of starvation, but what apparently threw off the timetable is that M'Lee's people turned on each other once their food was gone. I wonder if M'Lee threw herself a little "Best Cannibal Ever" party as she was sucking the marrow out of her mom. Anyway, M'Lee is proposing a deal: Even if she succeeds in killing the lot of them, she'll eventually starve to death anyway, so she'll control her hunger until Crichton and friends provide

her with a more permanent food supply. Crichton can't believe that he's expected to take her with him, but she says that Br'nee knows her planet of origin, so Crichton should get the location from him and take her there.

-- Page 7 --

Aeryn's bustling around mini-Command prepping this and that, and then she successfully activates the cannon. She tells Pilot that she and the child seem inexplicably to have reached an understanding. Pilot says he's encouraged, and that the kid's communication with *Moya* is improving. Aeryn muses that she feels quite at home with all the ship's Peacekeeper technology, prompting Rygel to suggest she stay over there. Aeryn, however, tartly says that she'll be returning to *Moya* shortly, and when she does, perhaps she and Rygel should have a little chat. Rygel starts with another retort, but Chiana shoves him with an admonition to keep his foot out of his mouth. Actually, he might want to keep it there -- better his than Aeryn's, don't you think? Anyway, Chiana attempts to play diplomat, pointing out that if they get attacked, the child is their only weapon at the moment. Aeryn doesn't want to drag the ship into a conflict it had nothing to do with starting, but Rygel wonders whether they'll have a choice.

D'Argo is complimenting Br'nee, as Br'nee's medicines have completely healed him. Just then, however, Crichton shows up and grabs Br'nee while blurting out the whole M'Lee story. D'Argo's ready to sign up for the execution party, but Zhaan tries to take a more moderate position, saying that what Br'nee did might not be entirely unreasonable. Crichton: "To murder sentient beings in order to save a few stinking plants?" Zhaan: "How animal-centric of you, John." Heh. Crichton apologizes, and Br'nee realizes that Zhaan is a Delvian, and therefore a plant. Crichton and D'Argo are ready to toss Br'nee out the door and take off, but Br'nee tempts them with charts with which to navigate the asteroid field, so Zhaan, citing the need for a cooler head for this mission, leaves with Br'nee.

Crais is digging into a bowl of stew or something when Scorpius tosses a chip into it, which he says contains his report to High Command. With more emotion than we've seen from him, he tells Crais that he's unfit for duty at any level, and he personally intends to see him stripped of rank and office. Crais goes ballistic, grabbing Scorpius and throwing him against several walls in an extended sequence, but suddenly, after Crais has been throttling him for a moment, Scorpius grabs his wrists and twists them away like he's Shaquille O'Neal playing Mercy with Nate Corddry. He tosses Crais away, steps one boot onto his chest, and then, in a vicious, electronic growl that's very different from his usual urbane mellifluousness, asks why Crais must force him to demonstrate his physical superiority to "[his] kind" as well. I'll take a guess -- good measure? He then pulls back, seeming to have a moment of chagrin at losing control like that, and, back to his usual voice, tells Crais that if he wants violence, he should attack his executioner.

-- Page 8 --

Crichton enters Br'nee's lab with the intent of collecting him and Zhaan, as the transport is repaired. But he finds Br'nee on the floor, and Br'nee tells him M'Lee surprised them and took Zhaan.

Cut to Crichton looking for M'Lee in the forest, yelling a big, grand speech about how she lied -- she said she wouldn't hurt any of them, and then she drags Zhaan off

and...he catches sight of a boneless corpse, and his brain finally catches up with him. It really does tend to lag behind quite often. Crichton berates himself for missing the bone thing, and yells, "Idiot!" Even the moss growing on the nearby rocks is like, "Word."

Aeryn returns to *Moya*, and after some predictable and unimportant back-and-forth with Rygel, she asks Chiana to join her for a moment. She then pulls her close and grabs Rygel by the ear, and informs them both that the baby and *Moya* are not going to be separated, and any more talk about it will result in them (well, Rygel) being thrown out into space. She then asks after the landing party, and upon hearing that Pilot's still checking, decrees that if they're not back in an arm, they're going to look for them. She leaves, and Rygel asks, "'We'?" Chiana: "She must mean you." Hee. At the transport, D'Argo's happy to hear someone enter -- but it's M'Lee, spikes down and sporting blue light bulbs as opposed to red. D'Argo takes this to mean she's no longer feral, which must mean she's eaten. I know this is a dramatic place to go to the break, M'Lee, but if you don't want a blast from the Qualta blade, I'd suggest you DENY THAT.

After the break, M'Lee tells D'Argo she didn't eat anyone -- she used all her remaining calcium to present herself in this way so he would listen. Before she can say anything else, though, her light bulbs turn red and she screams in agony, so apparently there wasn't a lot in reserve. D'Argo looks moderately sympathetic, but says he has nothing to offer her...but then he gets A Look as he tells her there's a ship out there with thousands of beings, and no one will regret their passing. He says that as soon as they blast off from the asteroid, the ship will come to investigate. M'Lee looks hopeful, and says she'll control her urges.

Crichton returns to the lab, and Br'nee tries to keep up the act. Crichton: "You know, it's funny. Sometimes I'm very, very slow." Agreed on all counts, except I'd say it's actually *hilarious*. Anyway, Crichton takes a million years to get to the point, and that's really kind of representative of the whole episode, but anyway: Zhaan has no bones, so M'Lee wouldn't want her. Crichton draws his gun and holds Br'nee at bay, and quickly finds a miniaturized Zhaan in a snazzy jar. Unfortunately, he gets too preoccupied with how much the specimen would go for on eBay to notice Br'nee coming for him. A fistfight ensues, with the hot human overcoming the round shambling mound, but while Crichton dithers over finding the control to un-miniaturize Zhaan, Br'nee gets to his feet and points Crichton's blaster at him. He gives a long-winded speech (is there any other kind in this episode?) about how he's consumed by his work as a botanist, and through Zhaan he might be able to discover medical advances his species has never even dreamed of. "Is that not a fair trade-off?" Sorry, dude, but this episode has dragged on far too long for me to start analyzing that One To Grow On. I'm happy to report, though, that Crichton's earlier speech about how he's so slow was covering the fact that he removed the *chakan* oil cartridge from his gun, so Br'nee is unable to shoot him as he activates the machine. It starts to rebuild Zhaan from the toes up as Br'nee hurls himself at Crichton, but Crichton tosses him into the beam, which neatly severs Br'nee in two before going back to the process of reconstituting Zhaan. Not sure how that worked from a logistical standpoint, but I'm not about to question it with five minutes left either. Zhaan reports a "weird sensation," but is none the worse for wear, and thanks Crichton.

-- Page 9 --

The underling from earlier enters Crais's quarters and reports that they've located the transport pod on the asteroid, and adds, in a more hushed tone, that Scorpius has ordered several Marauder teams into the asteroid field. He asks if it's true that Scorpius can sense their fears and their weaknesses; Crais, for his part, looks like it's just hit him that he'll never be allowed in the Captains Only Turkish Bath again. It's too bad -- he really does need to relax. Anyway, the point here is that this officer is loyal to Crais, and is trying to get some different orders out of him, but Crais is beyond caring at this point, and simply says to do as Scorpius commands.

Zhaan finishes plundering Br'nee's stores, and she and Crichton turn to go when an agitated M'Lee appears. She sinks to her knees, and seems to be willing to starve rather than attempt to eat them (well, Crichton, anyway) and Crichton says they have to find a way to take her with them. M'Lee nixes that idea, saying she'd never be able to control her urges, and informs them of what D'Argo told her about the Peacekeepers' imminent arrival. She cries, though, that she must eat something now, prompting Crichton to point her to Br'nee's corpse(s). She stands slowly, not daring to believe it for a moment, but rushes off-screen and gets to bone-crunching work.

Zhaan: "There is much cruelty in the universe." There's much grossness, too.

Back on *Moya*, Pilot is complimenting them on the charts they brought back, saying that now they'll be able to find their way out of the asteroid field. A re-bundled Crichton asks Aeryn about the baby, and Aeryn's face lights up as she tells him he's amazing, "and frightening." Elsewhere, Zhaan is lamenting the fact that all the plants on the asteroid will now go to waste, but D'Argo says they'll be found by someone else, and repeats a sentiment from earlier: "In the great scheme of things, it's all the same."

Zhaan wonders when their roles got reversed, and D'Argo tells her it happened when she needed it to. Rygel sexually harasses Chiana for a moment, and then Pilot tells Aeryn that *Moya* wants her to know how well she and the child are communicating now, and *Moya* would be extremely gratified if Aeryn were to choose a name for the baby. I'd be extremely gratified, too -- particularly if she'd choose one that's no more than, say, five letters? It's easier on the fingers that way. Aeryn's initial embarrassment gives way to bald joy. Aw.

In Br'nee's lab, Scorpius is giving his men instructions regarding their search of the asteroid. The underling from earlier enters and reports he found a survivor, and then M'Lee runs in and puts her arms around Scorpius in that same damsel-in-distress routine from earlier. The underling looks ready to pull her off, but Scorpius puts up a hand and says that they must sometimes show compassion. "As a matter of honor, sometimes we must be willing to give of ourselves." Hee. Scorpius, you crafty devil, you. I just hope for Crais's sake that he doesn't drink a lot of milk. M'Lee closes her eyes, and her light bulbs go from blue to red as we head into the closing credits.

-- Page 10 --

Next time: I don't know if I can stand it!

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<http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/show/farscape/family-ties/>

**- Unacceptable Losses -**

-- Page 1 --

Oh, wow! I can't believe I'm recapping *Family Ties*! Do you think I'll get to do the episode where Alex borrows diet pills from Mallory's friend Effie and gets hooked on speed?

Wait, what?

Oh. Sorry. So what *am* I doing?

You can't be serious. I can't afford the Kleenex for that! Don't talk to me about my contract!

Oh, fine. I made it through *Everwood*; I can make it through this. Establishing shot of *Moya*, still in the asteroid field. Crichton blurts out, "Tell me there is some kind of sick punchline coming!" I'm glad you're getting used to having me around. Anyway, to everyone's archly and sarcastically expressed chagrin, Rygel has left the ship in one of the pods and is refusing to acknowledge their hails, and moreover, he's about to depart the asteroid field, whereupon the Peacekeepers will undoubtedly spot him. D'Argo growls something in what's presumably his own language, and after hearing it, Rygel sniffs. I'd wonder why the translator microbes suddenly took a coffee break there, but given that Chiana informs us that D'Argo said something about Rygel's corpse and a "body function," they can be forgiven for thinking it was a conversation best sidestepped. Zhaan tries an appeal to Rygel's sense of right and wrong, an "interesting" choice, and Aeryn goes with an approach that's not doomed by definition, pointing out that whatever deal Rygel may cut with the Peacekeepers, Crais will never honor it. Rygel, however, is unmoved, as he's christened himself a "Dominar of action." It may sound a little grand, but I'm sure *Moya's* commodes would agree. Cut to the Peacekeeper command ship, where Crais and Scorpius are wondering about the meaning of the single unarmed transport's approach. Scorpius wonders if there are any other ships out there, but Crais answers that the only one is their own Marauder, with "the alien girl you adopted." Scorpius asks if Crais has found the security officer assigned to watch her. Hee. It's too bad we never see M'Lee again; I was kind of expecting in a future episode to see Scorpius sic her on some hapless enemy while languidly singing "The shin bone's connected to the...knee bone!" I think even the Lord would have liked that. Anyway, Crais ignores the question in favor of going back to wondering what Rygel's up to. Scorpius speculates that Rygel might want to become part of Crais's collection, as the camera pans sideways to rest on a stuffed Hynerian head on a pedestal to which I alluded last recap. I know the *Moya* crew members hate Crais, but I still think they might secretly allow themselves to enjoy this room a little. Crais asks if this is all just a game to Scorpius, which seems like an odd question but could refer to the fact that the end of Crais's career and perhaps his life is imminent, but Scorpius replies that he cares greatly about one thing -- the wormhole technology knowledge in Crichton's memory. Yes, I do recall picking up some very subtle cues to that being the case. Just then, some underlings enter with Rygel, Thronesled and all, in tow. Rygel intones that Scorpius and Crais want *Moya*, her child, the escaped prisoners, Aeryn, and especially Crichton. He goes on, "I want my freedom. Interested?" I'd say they're interested, interested, *very* interested...then we're in the opening credits.

-- Page 2 --

Back on *Moya*, Crichton, surprisingly, is the only one wondering if they should really be believing the worst, asking if it's possible Rygel's stalling for them. Everyone gives him a "Just stand there and look pretty" face, not that you can blame them for doing so on any level. Crichton suggests they go over what they know, and D'Argo rumbles that the map they took from Br'nee in the last episode has allowed Pilot to plot a starburst path away from the Peacekeepers. Unfortunately, *Moya's* child is too young to starburst, and his weapon systems aren't developed enough to take on the Command Carrier. Crichton says he's not going to be taken alive, and that he wants to "go down swinging." D'Argo agrees, and Aeryn scoffs, "Oh, just to be in the warm glow of all this testosterone!" For some reason, she sounds a little sarcastic. Crichton suggests a suicide mission -- one of them will take a transport pod laden with explosives, feign intent to surrender, and at the last second, steer the pod into the Command Carrier's nerve center. We cut away from the scene before they decide between rock-paper-scissors and one-two-three-shoot.

Rygel is dining away as Crais bites out that he's on his third helping. Rygel counters that it's for his third stomach. "That's what happens, you see. By the time it's full, the first one's empty again." Heh. Scorpius conversationally says that if he were to take Rygel back to the Gammak base and put him in the Aurora Chair, his hunger pangs would be the least of his problems. Well, that may be, Scorpy, but do you really want to sit through home movies of all the tail Rygel's scored over the years? Anyway, Rygel is unbowed, saying that his physiology won't tolerate the Chair, and Crais confirms that he'd die almost instantly. His delivery doesn't exactly suggest that he's advocating abandoning the idea, but he has been in quite a sour mood lately. Scorpius gets down to business: He'll give Rygel his freedom in exchange for Crichton, and despite Crais's protests, he deems *Moya* and everyone else on her irrelevant. However, in addition to his liberty, Rygel demands a ship, a qualified crew, money, a map to Hyneria, and a full pardon. We focus in on Scorpius's eyes, intense with concentration, and he realizes Rygel is lying. Interesting -- this implies that Rygel didn't plan to sell out his shipmates, but it's never mentioned what, then, his plan was, and it's kind of hard to figure. Did he intend to starve the enemy by single-handedly eating all their food supplies? Maybe Scorpius is reading into an unconscious conflict of which Rygel himself isn't aware. Scorpius orders Crais to imprison Rygel, but Rygel, in a serious tone, says that Crichton will not be taken alive. Now aware that Rygel has shifted into telling the truth, he asks if Rygel is willing to help him capture Crichton. Rygel takes a long moment...

-- Page 3 --

...and then Chiana answers for him: "I will not!" Turns out D'Argo is trying to get Chiana to put some restraints on and lock herself in one of the prison cells; that way, when the Peacekeepers board, she can claim that she's not loyal to the escapees, and she only helped them on the Gammak base because they forced her to. It's a pretty lame idea, given that Chiana had numerous chances to safely betray her shipmates to the Peacekeepers if she'd been so inclined, but the point is to show D'Argo's strong concern for Chiana's welfare here. The scene gets thick with emotion as Chiana snarls, "Don't tell me how to lie. It's one of the best things I do!" I don't suppose it would be necessary for him to tell you how to have sex, either. D'Argo says she's a pain in the *eema*, but one he's grown to enjoy. I'm thinking Chiana can relate.



Crichton is watching Zhaan stir some *lutra* oil, which she says is stable until it's mixed with *kronite* shavings, at which point it becomes highly explosive. The mixture proves Zhaan's point by igniting, and then Zhaan and Crichton express their sorrow that their time together appears to be at an end. I can't really do justice to these goodbye scenes, but they're all tinged with enormous sadness and regret. It's probably not a coincidence that Rygel isn't around.

In his chamber, Pilot is telling a typically affectionate Aeryn that between *Moya's* anxiety and his own, he's in a right state. He then addresses Aeryn by her first name, and if that's not enough to get you a little choked up, you're not a human being. At least you're watching the right show. Pilot says that he and Aeryn have shared a lot in their time together, and Aeryn proves that Sebaceans aren't immune to the power of this scene, as, through tears, she agrees. Pilot says there's no need for them all to be recaptured, and points out that Aeryn still has her Prowler. I love Aeryn for admitting that the thought of flight had occurred to her, and I didn't think it was possible for me to love her more. Aeryn Sun: Helping me understand the concept of infinity. She says she's not going anywhere, and Pilot asks her if she's come up with a name for *Moya's* child yet. "In case something happens, she doesn't want her son named by the Peacekeepers." I'm being killed by a Muppet here. This is ignominious. Aeryn, voice breaking again, says it remains her honor to name the baby, and she'll pick a good, strong name that he'll wear proudly. She reaches out and strokes Pilot as she adds, "In freedom, if I have anything to say about it." What am I supposed to do with that? They all think they're going to die or be captured, and none of them has any idea which would be the worse fate. Unsnarkable! Aeryn tries to change the subject to the *kronite* shavings, but she still looks like she might start bawling at any moment.

-- Page 4 --

Oh, great, Crichton's making a goodbye tape to his dad! And without an act break in between for me to go rehydrate! Crichton aborts the effort quickly, though, and then Aeryn appears and asks if his dad is anything like the man she met (in "A Human Reaction"). Crichton says the alien representation of his dad was "a little idealized," but mostly accurate. They look adoringly into each other's eyes as Aeryn tells him he's lucky -- when she was very young, her "battle-hardened, scarred" soldier of a mother told Aeryn that she was born out of love, but it seems like that's about all she ever told her. She goes on that she knows even less about her father, so Crichton slides his tape recorder toward her and tells her to leave him a message. "You never know. He might get it." They beam at each other to end the scene, and I don't care what weird part of the galaxy they're in, but them failing to kiss defies all known laws of both physics and chemistry.

On the Command Carrier, Rygel is soaking in a hot bath when he sees the stuffed Hynerian trophies and gets a little freaked. Crais then enters, and somewhat menacingly tells Rygel they need to decide his future. Rygel, too offhandedly, says that Scorpius is obviously the one in charge there, and I think Crais has proven himself predictably irascible enough that you won't be surprised to learn that he grabs Rygel's head and holds it underwater for several seconds. However, the twist is that he produces a data card, on which he claims is proof that Scorpius (whom he refers to as a "Scarran half-breed") intends to double-cross Rygel and order his slow execution as soon as Crichton is in custody. Rygel considers this, and asks why Crais is telling

him. Crais confesses that the only path in his future as far as the Peacekeepers are concerned is "court-martial, incarceration, execution." He tells Rygel that he wants to survive, just as Rygel does. Rygel: "And just how do we do that?"

Sometime later on *Moya*, the crew has learned that Rygel is returning, and discuss how much that stinks. I mean that in the sense that they deem the situation fishy, although you could be forgiven for thinking otherwise. Chiana and Pilot both report that there's no sign of Peacekeeper activity; nonetheless, Aeryn, D'Argo, Crichton, and even Zhaan bring weapons to bear on the hangar door. It opens, and Rygel imperiously Thronesleds in. Aeryn orders him to get off it and lie face down on the ground, but he easily refuses, saying he doesn't want to miss their response to what's about to happen. "And please, whatever your reaction, please don't let it include weapons fire." Hmm. Do extra-large loogies count as weapons? Anyway, Rygel's speech is all the introduction Crais needs, and the man appears at Rygel's side. Everyone's speechless except Crichton, who starts laughing. Crais: "Clearly an awkward situation." Apparently it's never too late to develop a capacity for understatement. Crais goes on that he's asked Rygel for asylum, and Rygel has granted his request. Aeryn asks why he needs asylum, but Crais says he'd prefer to answer any questions in protective custody. Aeryn has Pilot have the DRDs check the transport pod for tracking devices, and Pilot asks Chiana to reinstate the cell door functions on one of the tiers. Aeryn and Zhaan inspect Crais for weapons, and then D'Argo, the only one who hasn't spoken, goes from "simmer" to "boil" as he hits and kicks Crais to the floor, and demands that Crais tell his shipmates the truth. Crais admits that D'Argo didn't commit the crime for which he was imprisoned. "His mate was killed by someone else." Aeryn contemptuously adds that it was the wife's own brother, a Peacekeeper. In response to Crichton's disbelief that Crais knew the truth and yet kept D'Argo incarcerated, Crais says that regardless of his knowledge, only a tribunal order can release a convicted murderer. He adds that life is unfair, and they're all proof of that. Ooh, good idea -- appealing to their shared status as outcasts in an attempt to build a bond! Crichton: "If life was fair, you'd be dead." Um. Well, you can use the commercial break to go back to the drawing board.

-- Page 5 --

Crichton and Aeryn put Crais in a cell, and Aeryn asks if there's anything Crais wants to say to her, but Crais thinks everything was covered when she left him for dead in the Aurora Chair. Aeryn: "Good." Hee. Aeryn tells Crichton she's going to check out the transport ship, as she still doesn't trust either Crais or Rygel. Crichton locks Crais in and glowers at him, but the menace is reduced by how scorching he is. I think he needs to slap a fake scar on his face for occasions such as these, although I could just be nostalgic for Finola Hughes's days on *General Hospital*. What? Crichton asks what Crais is doing there, really, but Crais tells him he thinks it would be best for him if Rygel explained Crais's position for him. Crichton can't believe it: "You're letting Rygel be your advocate?" Yes, a pompous windbag with an elevated sense of his own importance as counselor? That *never* happens!

Rygel has decided to warm up with the two people he's likely to have the easiest time with, Chiana and Zhaan. Rygel tells them that Scorpius is carrying Crais's *mivonks* around in his hip pocket, and while he has no sympathy for "that butcher," he recognizes his potential value to them. Zhaan wonders, if Crais was in for such a

terrible fate, why Scorpius would have let him go, but Rygel explains that he and Crais deceived Scorpius; they told him that Crais would come to *Moya* under a flag of truce and convince the crew to surrender. I doubt Scorpius had much faith that this plan would work, especially given that he probably sensed that Rygel and Crais were lying, but maybe he thought it was worth even the small chance that they'd be able to bring Crichton back alive. Chiana theorizes that Crais must know what Scorpius is planning, and that could be useful to them. Zhaan concedes the point, but still isn't thrilled that Rygel went to the Command Carrier to sell them out. He says that's absolutely true (again, this conflict with Scorpius's statement is somewhat vexing) but in the end, he didn't, so they should make the most of it now. Of course, taking advantage of Crais's information doesn't preclude them throwing Rygel out of an airlock as soon as they get half a chance, but Rygel's probably got other things on his stomachs...er, "mind."

-- Page 6 --

D'Argo, thinking Zhaan is within earshot, is moving some heavy containers as he asks an explosives-related question. Aeryn appears and says Zhaan didn't mention the answer, to which D'Argo counters, "Perhaps she doesn't even know." Considering it sounds like Zhaan wrote this section of the galaxy's equivalent of *The Anarchist's Cookbook*, I'm willing to give her the benefit of the doubt. Anyway, the point of this scene (and thanks to Rygel for having arrived, which gave me a much-needed emotional break) is for Aeryn and D'Argo to say goodbye; Aeryn tells him that she relies on him now, and D'Argo expresses a similar sentiment. It's a testament to the power of the scene that I can't even bring myself to start singing "Islands In The Stream." Although somehow I think D'Argo would make a great country singer. Aeryn then changes the subject: "I'm sorry I didn't get a chance to meet your son Jothee." I see the translator microbes are on strike again, because there's no way she could possibly mean that. They share a nice moment talking about D'Argo's fatherly influence, and then D'Argo seriously says that he always thought he'd live much longer. Aeryn smiles: "I never thought I'd live this long." And I don't think I'll live through this recap. Aeryn takes her leave, and D'Argo bellows for Zhaan. Dressed in a pretty sweet leather jacket, the underling from last episode and the earlier scene comes in and tells Scorpius that the search team is confident of finding *Moya* soon. I neglected to mention this in the last recap, but the underling is actually Braca -- last episode was his first appearance. Something I also didn't mention is that the actor playing Braca, David Franklin, will be recognizable to *Xena: Warrior Princess* watchers as Brutus. (Hey, what can I say? Even I'd switch teams for Lucy Lawless. Also, just to be thorough, the guy who played Br'nee in the last episode, Marton Csokas, was Xena's lover Borias, but I don't think the most diehard Xena/Gabrielle 'shipper could have recognized him in that getup.) Braca reports no word from Crais, and then asks for and is granted permission to speak freely: If Scorpius suspected Crais didn't intend to return, why did he let him go? Scorpius somewhat obliquely says that we all have "windows of usefulness," which I take to mean he expects Crais to be dying on this mission one way or another. He adds that he suspects Braca's career may well be on the rise, and pats him on the arm before leaving the room. For someone who just tacitly got told a Captain's rank is in his future, Braca sure looks like he just shit his pants. Maybe that's an involuntary reaction to being touched by Scorpius.

-- Page 7 --

Crichton and Crais are both sitting now, and Crichton asks Crais how he's doing. Crais wonders why he would ask, but Crichton admits that he's homesick, and desperate for "human male-to-male conversation." Leaving aside the point that Crais isn't human, I think this shows Crichton truly thinks he's going to die, and as such has decided that there's no further need nor sufficient time for grudges and acrimony. Crais seems to have reached a similar state of mind, as he asks Crichton if he thinks it's an accident that their species are so much alike. They agree that they don't know the answer to that question, and Crais says that it's one of the mysteries he will miss solving. Crichton, who's actually in tears at this point, says that being in the cell must make Crais feel his mortality, and that's the feeling they all have, all the time, with Crais chasing them. With Crichton at his most emotionally vulnerable, Crais chooses similarly to lower himself, telling Crichton that he now realizes he didn't mean to kill his brother, and the intensity between these two as each refuses to break eye contact is startlingly affecting. Crichton, his voice breaking, asks if Crais has any idea what he put them all through. Crais says he thought his actions were about his brother, but somewhere, his priorities decayed, and he became more concerned with his image and career. Crichton says that if Crais means to help them, now is the time. Man, this show. Crais has been like, the seven deadly sins in a captain's uniform from the beginning, and here he is, believably showing signs of redemption. Of course, these things take time, as we'll see. By the way, Crais may have been a douche all season, but Lani Tupu is awesome (as Pilot as well).

The crew of *Moya*, Crais included, is assembled, and D'Argo tells them that the transport is loaded and has enough *lutra* oil to cause an immense chain reaction. Crais tells them that Scorpius won't delay attacking them once he has their location, and their *kamikaze* plan is bound to fail -- the Command Carrier's sensors will detect the explosive content and destroy the transport well out of range. Zhaan points out that until the catalyst is added, the explosives won't be detectable, but Crais counters that the fact that the ship is so heavily weighted down will be obvious. He asks Aeryn what she thinks, and she looks at Crichton all "What *exactly* did you say to him?" before conceding it's a long shot, but all they have. D'Argo, however, comes up with another plan: If they send the transport on a course for the Gammak base, Scorpius will be forced to pursue and destroy it, and they can take advantage of the opening to get *Moya* and the baby out of there, with the baby sticking close enough to *Moya* to get swept along in the starburst. Of course, they take considerably more words to say all of this, but there are seven of them and not all of them are all that bright. Zhaan points out that one of them will have to fly the transport, and I'm disappointed that none of them did the finger-on-the-nose "Not it!" Rygel does, however, hilariously glide his Thronesled back, and I never said I wasn't easily amused, but I'll take it. Crais, though, says that Scorpius won't pursue the transport, because there's one thing he values more than the base. Everyone turns dramatically to regard Crichton, who looks at Crais all, "I thought we had a moment back there, CAPTAIN BRINGDOWN."

-- Page 8 --

After the break, D'Argo is yelling at Aeryn and insisting that he be the one to undertake the mission. I guess maybe he figures if Scorpius doesn't take the bait, it'll be worth giving his life to destroy the Gammak base? Cut to Aeryn complaining to

Zhaan that D'Argo told her she has to stay behind and deal with the baby. Woman's work is never done! Zhaan calmly says D'Argo is right, as Aeryn is the only one the baby trusts. After exposition that tells us Aeryn hasn't got a name for the baby yet (...might want to speed up the thought process there, hon) Aeryn hotly tells Zhaan that it's amazing she can be a priest -- to live in such a violent world and still keep her center is no mean feat. It is hard to live in a world where people cut off their shipmates' arms at the drop of a hat. (Hey, it's my last recap -- I had to get that in one more time.) Zhaan, however, says that the moment she committed murder, she sacrificed her right to exist; since then, she views every moment as a "generous but undeserved" gift. You'd think, then, that Zhaan would be the one to sacrifice her life to save another. I wonder how the writers missed their sole opportunity for that one? D'Argo bellows at Aeryn to bring more *kronite*, and Aeryn's so off her game that she complies without a word.

Oh, God, not another goodbye! Chiana finds Crichton and asks if he's really going to go with D'Argo. Crichton smiles that if he's in the transport, Scorpius will pursue it, because he wants Crichton. Chiana, her voice breaking: "Well, what if other people want you too?" Yes, what if, purely hypothetically and not applying any double meanings, other people want you too? Crichton, realizing that Chiana wants him *that* way, asks if what she's doing is "some weird alien send-off." Chiana says she doesn't know any other way to thank him for what he's doing, and I'm going to skip right over that lest I get extremely sad in yet another way. Crichton nicely turns Chiana down, but she grabs him and urgently tells him he saved her life, and he tells her to pass on the favor. If that sounds a lot better than "pay it forward," that's because it is. Chiana does manage to steal a kiss before Crichton takes off.

Braca comes to Scorpius and tells him that High Command has pronounced Crais "irrevocably contaminated," (is that worse than "irreversibly contaminated"?) and as such, Scorpius is in command. I'm glad to hear they're so on top of things. Braca goes on that they should be locating *Moya* at any moment, and Scorpius tells him in order to prevent the crew from committing "an act of desperation," they'll be attacking unannounced. It's going to be tough to launch a surprise attack from a ship that's bigger than Saturn, but like High Command said, Scorpius is calling the shots around here. And the shots are these: They're to cripple *Moya* to the point where she can no longer function; if the baby responds to their signals, it's to be taken into custody, otherwise, it's to be destroyed. Braca confirms that all Scorpius wants is Crichton, and Scorpius agrees that everyone else is dispensable.

-- Page 9 --

So Aeryn has taken Crais over to the smaller ship, and Crais is grandly and somewhat hungrily gloating over the fact that the Peacekeeper technology was successful in creating a Leviathan-warship hybrid. Aeryn asks if that means there were other attempts to breed a ship such as this, and Crais happily agrees that there were "numerous" tries. "All ending disastrously, killing both mother and child. But now I know why." Well, I'm sure we all agree that it was worth it, then, even the Leviathan child who could probably disintegrate you right where you stand. Aeryn muses that the other Leviathans were wearing control collars, and Crais commends her on her intelligence. Of course, given that the baby would have destroyed *Moya* from the inside without the quick work of Pilot and Chiana, I think it's a little more complicated

than that, but when Crais's ego is talking, it's hard to hear anyone else. Crais thinks that the ship will have no effect on Scorpius, no matter how it's used, which just goes to show that time can prove anyone wrong. He goes on that the fact that the ship responds to direct voice command is by design, as, although the ship can support a Pilot, they saw no need to dilute the Captain's power, the "command and response possibilities," by making that a necessity. Aeryn is unhappy to learn that the ship won't have a Pilot, and tells Crais there will be no possibilities if they don't escape from Scorpius. Well, there are possibilities concerning torture and scientific experimentation, but I think we can all agree not to dwell on those. Crais agrees that the baby will be of no use to them until he's fully grown, so Aeryn warily tells him to leave him out of their escape. It feels like she's got half an idea that Crais might be up to something. I'd suggest finding the other half, and quickly.

Rygel is stunned to learn that Crichton is leaving him his possessions should he die and asks why, prompting Crichton to call him a "soulless bastard." Rygel takes offense, and if he doesn't actually know what a soul is, he's doing a good job of faking it. Crichton, however, points out that Rygel sold them out, and Rygel admits that he was going to until he realized that Scorpius wasn't buying, and he would have been next. However, although he can be selfish, given a chance, he can do the right thing. Crichton: "Rygel, I figure the right thing starts at the beginning of the day." I'm glad Crichton's never seen me when I'm out of coffee. Rygel lowers his head abjectly, and Crichton surprises him by kissing it. I'll have to remember that one. In a voice higher than his normal (but still not helium-affected), Rygel thanks Crichton, and then covers by saying, "For the possessions." Aw, Rygel's heart just grew three sizes! Hard to believe it can still fit in that little body.

-- Page 10 --

We see a large spread of food as Aeryn asks Chiana why she's brought them there. Chiana says they still have half an urn before the final batch of *lutra* oil is ready, so she wanted to let them all know how much she appreciates everything they've done for her. I'd point out that that means her earlier statement to Crichton wasn't true, but maybe the thought of thanking Rygel in her usual way caused her to get this flash of inspiration. We see that the voices have been coming from outside the room, as Chiana leads everyone in and says she made all their favorite dishes. Aw. Everyone (even Crais) is thrilled, except for Crichton...

...because he's back giving making the tape to his dad another try. He says that before he left, his dad told him that every man has a chance to be his own kind of hero, and he doesn't figure he's ever coming home, but he thinks he knows what his dad meant; his life now is strange and different, but it's his own. At least it is until Harvey shows up. We fade to the happy feast going on as Crichton continues that he has people who rely on him and that he cares about, and are his friends. He goes on: "'I have a job to do, and I am unafraid.' That's what you said when they asked you what it was like to walk on the moon." Not to trample the moment, but if I'm a reporter at that press conference, that's where I'm like, "Come again?" He tells his dad that he taught him well, and then: "This is John Crichton. Somewhere in the universe." That somewhere being Snorflesville in the great state of YOU'RE STILL KILLING ME HERE.



Everyone is gathered in front of the transport, and Zhaan is praying to the Goddess on D'Argo and Crichton's behalf. She anoints them with something and intones, "Any blessings earned over time by my soul I now extend to you." Given that she earlier judged herself to be unworthy to live, I hope said extension is in fact limited to her good deeds. D'Argo asides to Crichton that he hates "this stuff," and Crichton tells him that "chicks love it." Rygel botches his attempt at a poignant farewell, and then Crichton asks Crais if he has any final words of wisdom. Crais tells him that Peacekeeper pilots are trained to expect evasive maneuvers, and he should fly on a direct course. Crichton looks at Crais like, "Thanks for telling me to die as quickly as possible, dick." Chiana begs D'Argo to come back to them, but her words have the opposite effect she intended, as he hands Zhaan the holo of his wife and son, telling her to make sure that Jothee remembers him. But there's a twist in the plan, as Aeryn comes up to them and tells them to be certain to get the timing right -- it appears they're going to bail out at some point and Aeryn will pick them up. Crichton already has his flight suit on, and D'Argo cautions Aeryn that he can only last a quarter of an arn in space, but she assures him she'll find them in time. That's good news -- not only are we finally going to get some action here, but it means that we won't have to add to the fifty-six heart-wrenching goodbyes already in the episode. And indeed, Aeryn and Crichton agree not to say goodbye, and he and D'Argo get on their way.

-- Page 11 --

Braca reports the approach of the transport to Scorpius. Scorpius notes the vector is toward the Gammak base, but orders Braca to do nothing until he has more information, as he suspects the pilot could be Crais, or "anything." I'm not clear why he would think Crais would voluntarily be going on a suicide mission, and I'm not sure the DRDs could pilot that thing, or if they're quite loyal enough to try. But again, Scorpy's the one with the leather hood. People with those tend to dominate...wait, that's not right.

D'Argo is telling Crichton that once they inject the oil into the largest canister, it will set off a chain reaction, and Crichton asks how long Zhaan said they'll have to get out. D'Argo: "She was vague to the point that I suspect that she doesn't have a clue." Well, she is a religious type. Pilot makes contact and tells them "Peacekeeper voice traffic" indicates that they're aware of the transport's presence and destination, but there's no indication of pursuit. However, that is sure to change, as we cut to Braca telling Scorpius that preliminary scans show "the Luxan and the human" to be aboard the transport. Scorpius looks chagrined, probably that Crichton is putting his life in jeopardy, and tells Braca to pursue, and to alert the base to the possibility of an attack. Braca doesn't really see the urgency, but Scorpius hisses, "Do it!" Get him any more pissed and that electronic voice is going to come out again.

Crichton asks how D'Argo's doing. D'Argo: "I have to pee." Hee. They both giggle. On *Moya*, Zhaan reports that the Peacekeepers are moving away. Chiana, however, says they don't have enough room to pull off their leave-the-field-and-starburst plan yet, and besides, they have to give Aeryn sufficient time to rescue Crichton and D'Argo. Rygel still wants to go, but Zhaan impatiently shushes him, and then asks Pilot to make sure the baby understands where he has to be in order to be sucked along in the starburst. Pilot assures her he will, and then we linger on an ambiguous-looking Crais.

Scorpius gives his Prowlers a "direct, inviolate order" that the occupants of the transport are to be taken alive. He doesn't add that anyone who screws up will involuntarily have his small intestine ripped out through his throat, but they're Peacekeepers. They know.

Crichton and D'Argo bicker a bit, and then D'Argo tells Crichton to arm the *kronite* shavings. Cut to Aeryn, monitoring them and urging them to get on with it. Pilot reports that the baby isn't responding to his entreaties, and Aeryn suggests that he call him by his name. She wells up just a bit as she goes on, "It's Talyn. It was my father's." I held off mentioning the name to do full justice to Aeryn's reveal there. I think it was worth all the extra letters I had to type.

-- Page 12 --

Braca reports that an explosive device aboard the transport has just been armed. Doesn't it seem inefficient to have Braca running in and out to keep updating Scorpius? I know Scorpius looks imposing in the chair, but you'd think if he wants Crichton that badly, he could stand in front of a tactical display for ten minutes. Scorpius gives props to Crichton for the plan, unhappily musing that if Crichton ignites the oil surface of the moon, they'll have to abandon the base, yet he can't risk destroying the knowledge in Crichton's brain. "And he knows that!" Of course, if Crichton intends to die in the explosion, as it appears, Scorpius should just kill him and save the base, but regardless, he'd probably give a guttural electronic Scarran curse, so it's just as well he does so here.

As the transport approaches the moon, D'Argo and Crichton have finished their preparations, and D'Argo says it's time to go. Crichton asks why he's not afraid. D'Argo: "Fear accompanies the possibility of death. Calm shepherds its certainty." Crichton smiles: "I love hangin' with you, man." That'll be convenient if you both get captured. Crichton gives D'Argo his dad's good-luck ring-on-a-chain, and D'Argo kisses it before they head for the exit. Crichton dons his helmet and compares them to "Kirk and Spock, Abbott and Costello," before hitting the eject button and sending them out into space. It's too bad he didn't have time to mention Siegfried and Roy, because then we would have been getting somewhere. Anyway, the two of them hurtle toward the camera, and then Zhaan urgently yells for Aeryn to retrieve them. Crichton communicates with Aeryn, who's picking up his transmission but can't see him yet. She asks how D'Argo is, and D'Argo gives Crichton a jaunty thumbs-up. He's not going to be nearly as cheerful when the contents of his bladder turn to ice. Just then, the transport reaches its destination and spectacularly ignites the entire surface of the moon. Everything seems great for a moment, until Pilot reports that someone has boarded Talyn. Rygel: "It's Crais." Hey, *you* brought him back, short stuff. Unaware that anything's wrong, Crichton gloats to (I think) the base, "John Crichton was here." Shall we wait until after the commercial break to ruin his mood?

*Vox populi, vox Dei.* Crichton asks Aeryn where she is, as D'Argo is only semi-conscious now. Aeryn says that she can see them, but there are too many other Prowlers around, and if she swings in to pick them up, they'll be sure to notice and shoot them all down. Meanwhile, Pilot reports that Talyn has broken away from *Moya*. And over there, Crais orders Talyn deeper into the asteroid field, where the debris is densest. Aeryn and Crichton hear this, as do the *Moya* crew members, and Rygel asks him what the heck he's doing. Crais gloats that he's saving himself, and despite

Aeryn's shouted orders for him to leave Talyn, he refuses, cheerily saying that assuming she survives, he hopes that when they next meet, their relationship will be much different. I don't doubt that that will be the case, Crais -- it's just a question of whether you'll remain alive to see it. Aeryn wails that he can't separate a child from its mother, but Crais blithely points out that that was done to both of them. Crais bids Aeryn goodbye and takes Talyn into the field, much to everyone's deep chagrin. Chiana then sees that the Command Carrier is returning, and Crichton urges them to starburst immediately. Zhaan doesn't want to leave him and D'Argo, and Rygel co-signs that, but Crichton tells him that this "is not the time to give up selfishness." Heh. Chiana points out that Aeryn isn't back either, but Aeryn says she's not leaving D'Argo and Crichton. D'Argo, for his part, would be humming the *Jeopardy!* theme music at this point if he were fully conscious.

-- Page 13 --

Aeryn orders Pilot to starburst, but Pilot reports that they now can't -- *Moya* won't leave without Talyn, as she fears that he doesn't understand what he's doing by listening to Crais. Crichton begs *Moya* to hear him -- they all care about Talyn, and have gone to great lengths not only to save themselves but also him and her. We see a montage of the crew and the ship's corridors as Crichton continues that the only hope to rescue Talyn is for *Moya* to save herself first. He thanks her for everything, and tells her to do what she has to do. For not really being able to give *Moya* much in the way of tangible characteristics, the show certainly does a good job of developing the relationships between her and her charges. Chiana, in a panic, says that in fifteen *microts*, they won't be able to escape, but just then, *Moya* powers up and initializes starburst. Rygel throatily whispers a goodbye, and then the ship is gone. D'Argo passes out, Aeryn reports that she still can't get to Crichton, and Crichton wearily responds that it may not matter, as D'Argo's unconscious. Aeryn tries to keep her face from shattering, and then we see D'Argo let Crichton's dad's ring slip from his grasp. It floats away, and ironic triumphant music plays as Crichton grasps D'Argo's hand into the cliffhanger ending.

And what an ending to an amazing last stretch of the season! And speaking of endings, this concludes my recapping run for this show, which I couldn't have enjoyed more. Thanks to the 'Scapers for picking me for the charity auction ages ago, because I never would have volunteered to recap this show otherwise. And damn you all for making me care about Muppets!

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